God
843.8
Blo/Blo
77329

00077329

Digitized with financial assistance from the
Government of Maharashtra
on 18 July, 2018

[*Frontispiece.*]

THE BLOCKADE.

(*LE BLOCUS.*)

AN EPISODE OF

The Fall of the First French Empire.

77329 a

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH OF MM. ERCKMANN-CHATRIAN.

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS.

Kx-e-50

LONDON:
SMITH, ELDER & CO., 15, WATERLOO PLACE.
1869.

God
843.8
B10/B10
77329

CONTENTS.

		PAGE
I.	Father Moses and his Family	1
II.	Father Moses' Speculation	14
III.	A Circumcision Feast	23
IV.	Father Moses compelled to bear Arms	32
V.	Father Moses receives Welcome News	46
VI.	A Disagreeable Guest	55
VII.	Sergeant Trubert in a New Light	66
VIII.	Father Moses' First Encounter	72
IX.	Approach of the Enemy	84
X.	An Engagement with the Cossacks	94
XI.	Father Moses Returns in Triumph	105
XII.	The Enemy Repulsed	114
XIII.	A Deserter Captured	131
XIV.	Burguet's Visit to the Deserter	151
XV.	Trial of the Deserter	161
XVI.	A Sortie of the Garrison	179
XVII.	Famine and Fever	201
XVIII.	Death of Little David	210
XIX.	The Passover	221
XX.	Peace	231

THE BLOCKADE

I.

FATHER MOSES AND HIS FAMILY.

SINCE you wish to know the details of the blockade of Phalsburg, in 1814 (said Father Moses to me), I will relate all the particulars.

I lived there, in the street of the Jews, in the small house at the right-hand corner of the market-place; I carried on my trade of buying and selling old iron below, under the arches,* and lived upstairs with my wife Sarah, and little Sâfel, the child of my old age. My two other boys, Itzig and Fromel, were in America, and my daughter Zeffen was married to Baruch, the leather-seller, at Saverne.

* In many French towns, the houses forming the square in the centre of which the market is held, have an arcade running through their whole length, under which are the ever-open shops of the dealers, many of whom have also stalls in the market proper for the sale of goods on market-days.

Besides dealing in iron, I traded in old shoes; old linen, and the clothes which the conscripts sold on arriving at their dépôt, and receiving their equipment. Travelling dealers bought the old linen of me for paper-making; and as for the rest, I sold it to the country people. This business was very profitable; for thousands of conscripts came through Phalsburg week after week, and month after month. They were inspected at once, at the Mairie, clothed, and then sent on to Mayence, Strasburg, or elsewhere. This lasted a long time; but after the Russian campaign, and the great conscription of 1813, the country began to be tired of war.

You may be sure, Fritz, that I had not waited till that time to put my two sons beyond the clutches of the recruiters. These lads had plenty of good sense; at twelve years of age their minds were made up, and, rather than fight for the King of Prussia, they would have gone to the other end of the world.

Of an evening when we were all sitting at supper, by the lamp with its seven lights, their mother would often cover her face with her hands, and say, "My poor boys! my poor boys! the time will soon come when you will go to be soldiers, to be shot, or cut to pieces. Oh, what misery to think of it!" I noticed that they turned pale, and I laughed to myself, for I thought, "You are no fools; you want to keep a whole skin; and you are right." If I had had any children who would have gone for soldiers, I should have died

of grief; I should have said, "These are not of my race!"

My sons grew in beauty, and in stature. At fifteen Itzig already was doing a pretty business; he bought cattle on his own account, in the villages, and sold them at a profit to Borich, the butcher at Mittelbronn; Fromel was not behindhand, he was the best at selling the old things that we had stored in three stalls in the market-place. I should have liked to keep these boys at home. My happiness was to look on them and my little Sâfel, with his curly head, and his eyes sparkling like a squirrel's. I often folded them to my arms, without speaking, for terrible ideas passed through my mind after 1812. I knew that whenever the Emperor returned to Paris he demanded four hundred millions of francs, and two or three hundred thousand men, and I said to myself, "This time they will all be marched off, even boys of seventeen and eighteen."

The news was worse and worse every day; and one evening I said to them, "Listen to me: you both know what trade is, and what you do not know you will learn. If you stay here a few months longer you will be drawn in the conscription, you will be marched to the Place, to learn how to handle a gun, and then you will go away, and I shall hear of you no more." Sarah began to sob, and we all sobbed together. After a little while, I continued, "But if you start at once from Havre to America, you will get there safe and sound; you will trade there as you do here; you will

get money; you will marry; you will increase and multiply, according to the word of the Lord; and you will send me money, according to His commandment, 'Honour thy father and thy mother.' I will bless you, as Isaac blessed Jacob, and you shall live long in the land. Make your choice."

They chose to go to America, immediately; and I went with them as far as Sarreburg. They had twenty louis each, which they had made in trade, so I had no need to give them anything but my blessing; and all that I told them has come to pass; they are both still alive; they have many children, which are my seed; and when I want money they send it to me.

When Itzig and Fromel were gone, there remained with me only Sâfel, my Benjamin, the last born, the one better beloved than the others, if that be possible. I had, besides, my daughter Zeffen, married, at Saverne, to a good, honest man, Baruch; she was the eldest, and had already borne me a grandson, named David, according to the will of the Lord, who desires that the dead shall be replaced in the families of their descendants; and David was the name of Baruch's grandfather. The child they were expecting was to be called Esdras, as my father was.

This was my situation, Fritz, before the blockade of Phalsburg, in 1814. Everything had been well up to that time, but for the last six weeks all had gone wrong in the town and in the country round. Thousands of wounded choked up the houses; the typhus broke

out; there had been none to till the ground for the last two years; and everything was dear—bread, and meat, and drink. The dwellers in Alsace and Lorraine came no more to the market, nobody bought the goods in the shops—and when goods do not sell, they may as well be stones or sand; one lives in poverty in the midst of abundance, and famine draws nigh on all sides. Well! in the midst of all this, the good Lord granted me a great satisfaction, for at that very time, the beginning of November, the news was brought to me of the birth of my daughter Zeffen's second son, and that he was a fine boy. My joy was so great, that I set out instantly for Saverne.

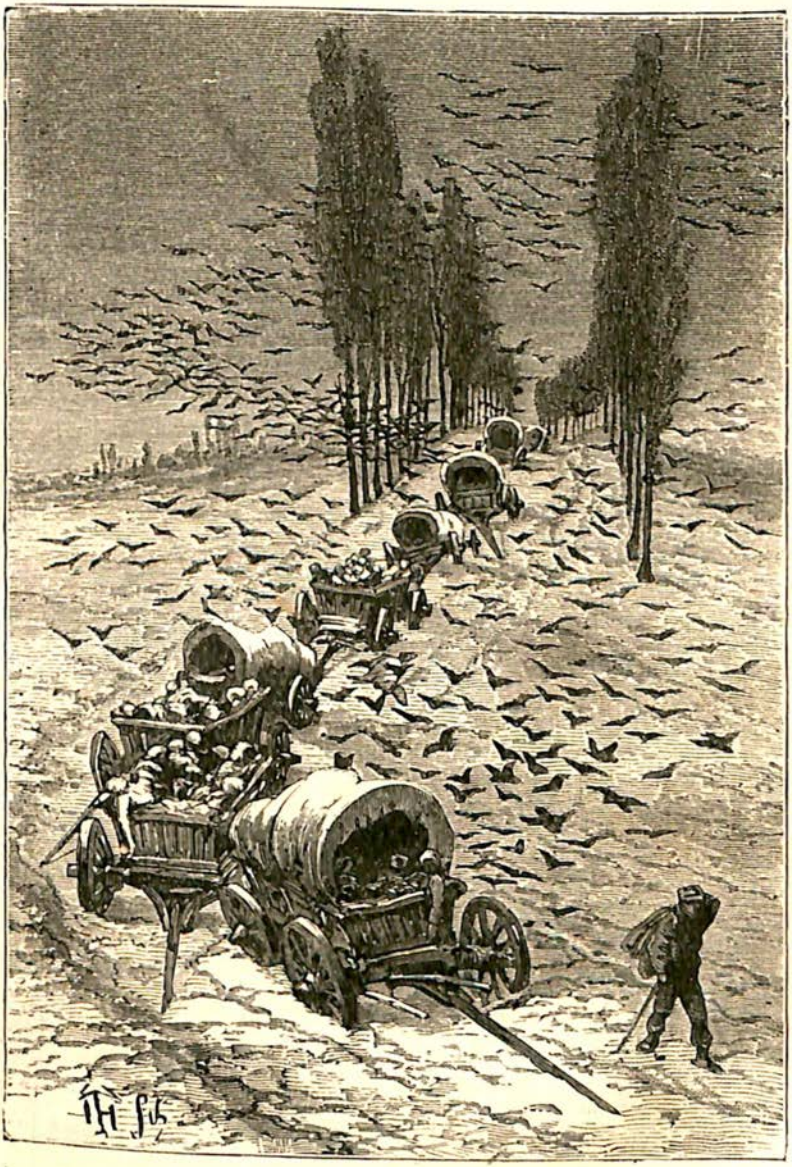
You must know, Fritz, that if my joy was great, it was not only on account of my grandson's birth, but because my son-in-law would not be forced to go to the wars, if the child lived. Baruch had always been lucky up to that time; when the Senate passed the law that married men should be exempt from the conscription, he had just married Zeffen; and when the Senate decreed that married men, having no child, should draw, his first child was born, and that saved him; and now that, according to the reports, they were going to vote that married men, having only one child, should go all the same, Baruch had two. In these times it was a blessing to have plenty of children; that saved you from being massacred: wherefore I took my staff, and hastened to see if the child was strong and healthy, so as to save his father. For years to come,

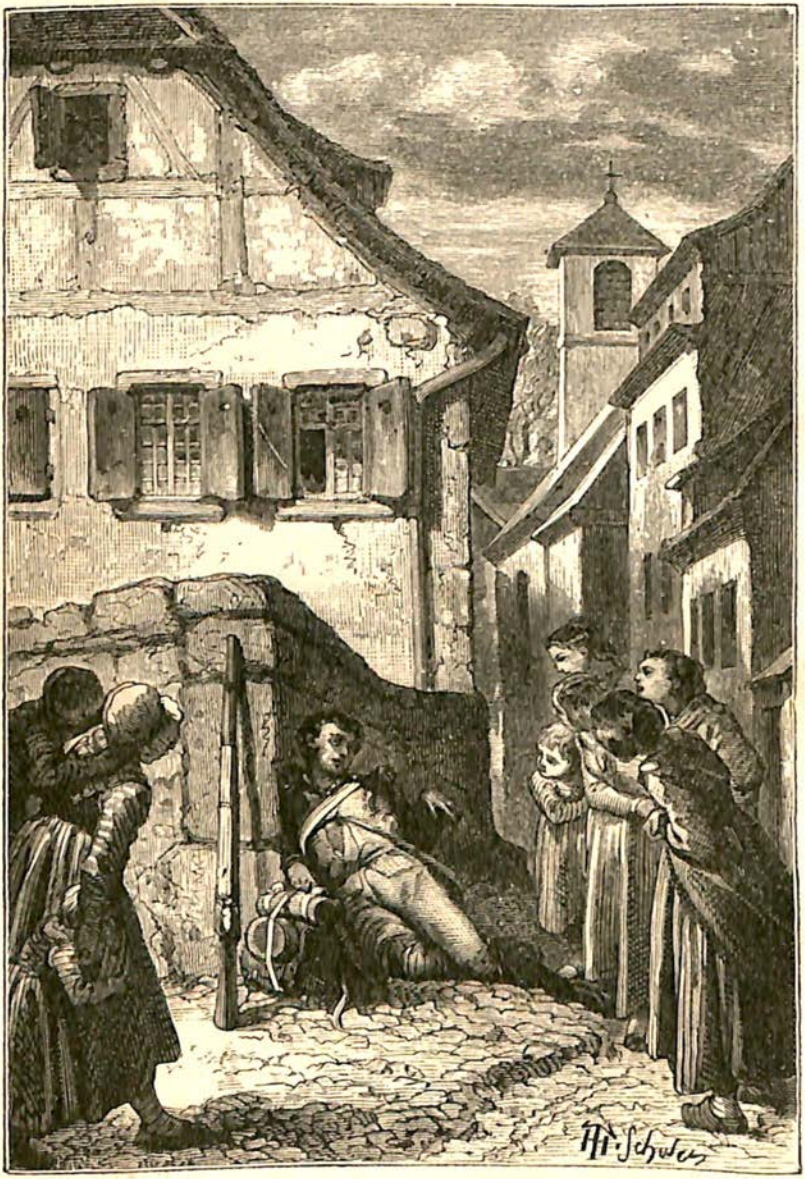
if God spares my life, I shall remember that day, and the sight I saw on my road.

The ascent was so crowded with carts, full of sick and wounded, that they formed one unbroken line from the Quatre-Vents to Saverne. The peasants of Alsace, who had been pressed to transport these unfortunate creatures, had taken their horses out during the night and fled, abandoning their carts where they stood: the frost had lighted on them: nothing stirred; all were dead—you might have taken it for a long graveyard. Thousands of ravens darkened the sky like a cloud, flapping their countless wings, and filling the air with their cries. I should never have thought that heaven and earth could bring forth so many ravens. They were settling on the carts; but when a living man approached, the creatures rose and flew off, some to the wood of La Bonne-Fontaine, some to the ruins of the old convent of Dann.

As for me, I quickened my step, skirting the road; I knew I must not stop, for the typhus was at my heels. Fortunately, the winter begins early at Phalsburg. The keen wind was blowing from the Schneeberg; and these mountain winds drive away all diseases, so they say, even the plague. What I have been telling you, was the retreat from Leipzig, in the beginning of November. When I reached Saverne, I found the town full of troops, artillery, infantry, and cavalry, *pêle-mêle*.

I remember that, in the principal street, the windows of an inn were open, and a long table was to be seen





inside, covered with viands. All the guard of honour stopped there; they were young men of good families, and had plenty of money, notwithstanding their shabby uniforms. As soon as they caught sight of the table in passing by, they alighted from their horses and rushed into the dining-room. The innkeeper, Hannès, made them pay five francs apiece, and as soon as they had seated themselves, a servant ran in, crying out, "The Prussians! the Prussians!" They instantly rose up, leaped into their saddles like madmen, and went on without looking behind them, so that Hannès sold his dinner more than twenty times over. I have often thought since, that such rascals ought to be hanged—that they ought; that way of getting money is not trade, and I was disgusted at it!

But if I were to tell you all I saw—the faces of the dying, how they lay there, the moans they uttered, and then the tears of those who dragged themselves along till they could go no farther—oh, it would be too dreadful! I saw, on the ascent of the old bridge of the Tannerie, one of the guard of honour, a youth of seventeen or eighteen, lying with his face on the bare stones. I have never forgotten the poor boy; he tried to raise himself up, from time to time, stretching out his hand, black as soot: he had a bullet in his side, and his hand was rotting. The poor soul had doubtless dropped from one of the waggons. None of the people durst help him. They stood at a distance, saying to each other, "He has the typhus! he has the typhus!"

Oh! what horrors! One dares not think of these miseries.

Now, Fritz, I must tell you of something else that happened that day; it was then I saw Marshal Victor. It was late when I left Phalsburg, and night was coming on when I reached Saverne. As I went up the High Street, I saw that all the windows from the top to the bottom of the "Sun" were lighted up. Two sentries were pacing up and down under the archway, and officers in full uniform were going in and out; splendid horses were tied up to the rings all along the wall, and in the courtyard I saw the lamps of a carriage shining like two stars. The sentries prevented people from going through the street; but I must needs pass, for Baruch lived farther on. I was pushing my way through the crowd before the inn, and the first sentry was crying out, "Back! back!" when an officer of hussars—a little stocky man, with great red whiskers—came towards me from under the gateway, saying, "Ah, Moses, is it you? I am glad to see you again!" and he shook hands with me.

I opened my eyes, I can tell you: one does not see a superior officer shaking hands with a working-man every day. I looked up astonished, and then I recognized the commandant, Zimmer. We had been at school together thirty-five years before, to Father Genaudet, it is true, and we had run about the town and the fortifications as children do: but Zimmer had been at Phalsburg many times since that without ever

thinking of his old companion Samuel Moses. "Come along," said he, laughing, and catching hold of my arm; "I must introduce you to the Marshal."

And in spite of me, and without saying another word, he led me under the archway, and from the archway to a large apartment, where two long tables, loaded with bottles and lights, were laid for the officers of the staff. A number of superior officers—generals, colonels, commandants of hussars, dragoons, and chasseurs, in cocked hats, helmets, and shakos—with their swords clanking behind them, were walking about with pensive looks, or were talking together till it should be time to sit down to table. We could hardly get through the throng, but Zimmer kept hold of my arm, and pulled me along to the end of the apartment, where there was a small door that led to a lofty, well-lighted room, with two windows that looked on the garden. The Marshal was standing there bare-headed; his back was turned towards us, and he was dictating his orders. Two officers of the staff were writing. That was all I noticed at the time, because I was so frightened. Just as we entered, the Marshal turned round. I saw that he had the countenance of a good old Lorraine peasant. He was tall and powerful; his hair was beginning to turn grey; he was about fifty, and a wonderfully fine man of his age.

"Marshal, this is our man!" said Zimmer. "He is an old schoolfellow of mine, Samuel Moses—a chap that has been running the country these thirty years, and who knows every village in Alsace and Lorraine."

The Marshal came within four paces of me, and looked at me well. I held my cap in my hand all of a tremble. After having looked at me for two minutes, he took a paper, which one of the secretaries gave him, read it, and signed it, and then turning round, he said, "Well, my brave fellow; what do they say of the last campaign? What do they think of it in your villages?"

When I heard him call me "my brave fellow," I took courage, and I answered, that the typhus was very bad, but that they had not lost confidence, for they knew that the Emperor and his army were at hand.

But he interrupted me sharply, saying, "Yes, yes! but will they fight to defend themselves?"

I answered, "The men of Alsace and Lorraine will fight to the death, every one of them; for they love the Emperor, and are ready to sacrifice themselves for him."

I said that out of prudence, but he saw well enough by my face that I was not fond of battles, for he smiled good-humouredly, and said, "That will do, commandant; it is well."

The secretaries had gone on writing. Zimmer made me a sign with his hand, and we went out together. As soon as we were in the street, he cried out, "I wish you a pleasant journey, Moses!"

The sentries let me pass, and I went on, trembling all the way. I soon reached the door of Baruch's small house; it was at the bottom of the lane, where were

formerly the Cardinal's stables. I knocked more than once. It was as dark as pitch. What a happiness it is, Fritz, after having seen such terrible things, to reach the spot inhabited by those we love! The pulse beats softly, and we think with pity of the power and glory which are the cause of so much misery in the world. After waiting a few moments, I heard my son-in-law come into the passage, and open the door. Baruch and Zeffen had given me up long ago.

"Is it you, father?" asked Baruch.

"Yes, my son, it is I. I am late, but I have been detained on the road."

"Come in," said he.

And we went into the little passage, and afterwards into the little room where Zeffen, my daughter, was lying in bed, very pale, but looking very happy.

She had recognized my voice, and gave me a sweet smile. As for me, my heart beat with pleasure, but I could not speak. I embraced my daughter, and looked everywhere to see where the child was. Zeffen had him in her arms, under the bed-clothes. "Here he is," said she.

Then she showed him to me, wrapped in his swaddling-clothes. I saw at once that he was fat and strong, and his little hands were tightly closed, and I said, "Baruch, he is exactly like my father, Esdras. Be he welcome in this world!"

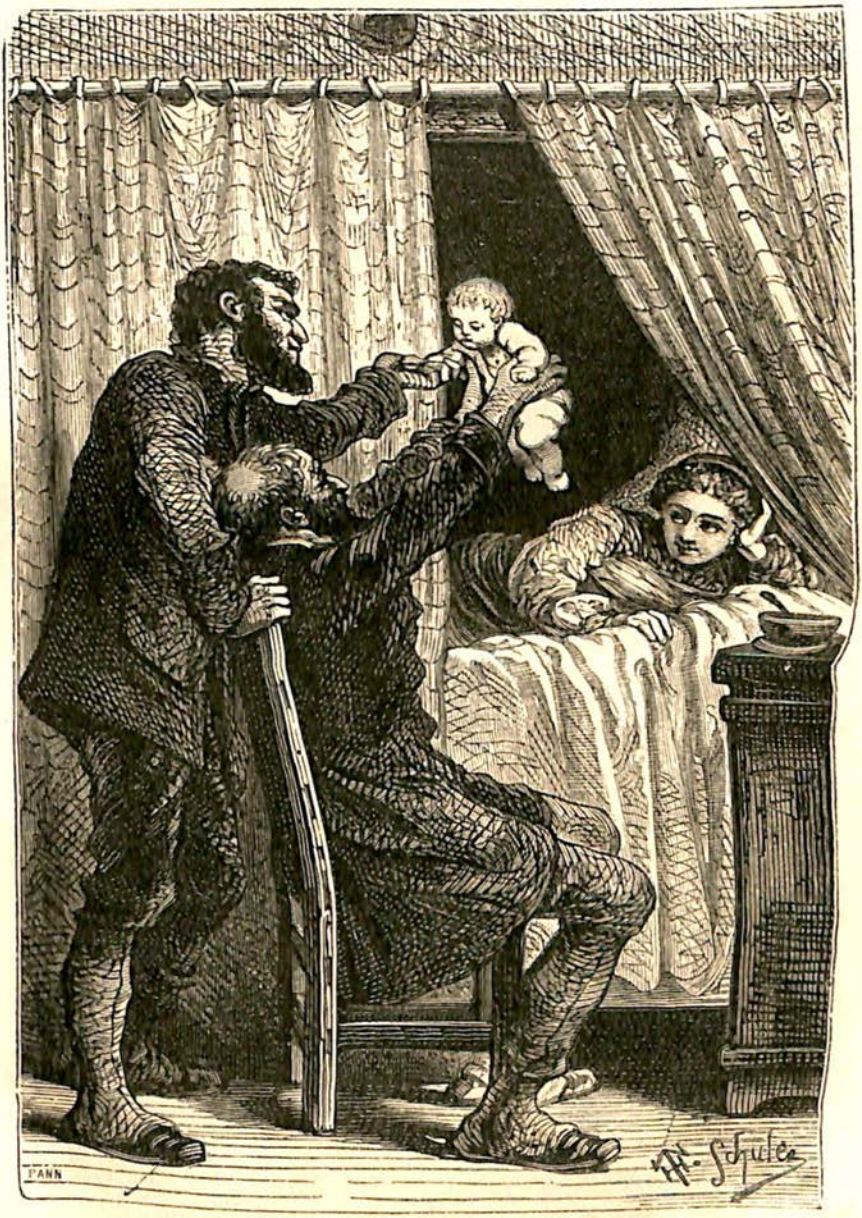
I wanted to see him quite naked, and I undressed him. It was warm in the little room, for the lamp, with its seven lights, was burning. My hands trembled

as I undressed him; he did not cry; my daughter helped me. "Let me do it, father," said she. My son-in-law stood behind me, looking on. We all had tears in our eyes.

I stripped him then quite naked; he was as pink as a rose, and his little head rolled from side to side, still heavy with the long sleep of ages. I lifted him up above my head; I gazed at his thighs covered with rings of fat, at his little feet drawn up, at his wide chest, and his well-covered loins; and I was ready to dance like David before the Ark, and to sing: "Praise ye the Lord. Praise, O ye servants of the Lord, praise the name of the Lord. Blessed be the name of the Lord from this time forth and for evermore. From the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same the Lord's name is to be praised. The Lord is high above all nations, and His glory above the heavens. Who is like unto the Lord our God? . . . He raiseth up the poor out of the dust. . . . He maketh the barren woman to keep house, and to be a joyful mother of children."

Praise the Lord! Yes; I was ready to break forth in singing, but all that I could say was, "He is strong and beautiful, and will live long! He will be the benediction of our race, and the comfort of our old age." And I blessed them all.

Then, having given him back to his mother, I went to kiss the other, who was fast asleep in his cradle. We stayed a long while, looking at each other in perfect


H. Schulz
PANN

happiness. Without, the horses galloped, the soldiers halloed, the carriages rolled past. Within, all was calm; the mother suckling her child.

Ah, Fritz, I am an old man now, but these far-off things are ever before me, just as when they happened; my heart beats quicker when I think of them, and I bless God for His great goodness—I bless Him and thank Him; He has given me length of days; He has given me to see even to my third generation. I am not weary of life; I would live on to see the fourth and the fifth. His will be done!

I thought of speaking of what had happened to me at the "Sun," but, compared with my great joy, everything else seemed of no consequence; and it was only after I had left the room, to let Zeffen go to sleep, while taking a mouthful of bread and a glass of wine with Baruch, that I told him the story; at which he was very much astonished. "Listen, my son," said I: "this man asked me if we would defend ourselves. That shows that the allies are following our armies, that they are marching by hundreds of thousands, and that we can no longer keep them from entering France; so that in the midst of our happiness there are great troubles to be feared; and others will do unto us the evil we have done unto them for the last ten years. At least I think so. God grant I may be mistaken!" After these words, we, too, went to bed. It was full eleven o'clock; and the noise and tumult was still going on in the streets.

II.

FATHER MOSES' SPECULATION.

THE next morning early, as soon as breakfast was over, I took my stick to return to Phalsburg. Zeffen and Baruch both begged me to stay, but I said, "You do not think of mother, who is expecting me. She has not a minute's peace. She is first upstairs, then down, then looking out of the window. No, I must go. Now that we are easy, Sarah must not be left in anxiety."

Zeffen said no more, but filled my pockets with apples and walnuts for her brother Sâfel. I kissed them once more, little and big; then Baruch came with me to the end of the garden, where the roads to Schlittenbach and Lutzelburg separate.

All the troops had left; there remained only the sick and a few laggards. But the long row of motionless carts was still to be seen in the distance on the brow of the hill, and bands of men were busy digging graves on the other side of the road.

I could not bear the thought of passing that way again. I shook hands with Baruch where the two roads

parted, promising him to come again with the grandmother for the naming of the child. Then I took the road which passes through the valley and the woods on the banks of the Zorn. This road was thickly covered with dead leaves, and for two hours I walked through them, thinking sometimes of the "Sun," of Zimmer, of Marshal Victor—his noble height, his square shoulders, his grey head, his coat covered with gold embroidery and lace. Then I pictured to myself Zeffen's room, the baby, and its mother; then the war we seemed likely to have, and the enemies that were advancing on all sides.

I stopped from time to time in the midst of these valleys, stretching as far as the eye could reach, all covered with firs, oaks, and beeches, and I said to myself, "Who knows? The Prussians, the Austrians, and the Russians, will perhaps soon pass through all this!"

But what delighted me was to think, "Moses, thy two sons, Itzig and Fromel, are in America, far beyond the reach of cannon; with their packs on their shoulders, they go from village to village, and fear no danger. And thy daughter Zeffen may sleep in peace too; Baruch has two fine children, and he will have one every year till the war is over. He will sell leather to make knapsacks and shoes for those who go to fight, but he will stay at home himself."

I smiled when I reflected that I was too old for the conscription; that I was a greybeard, and that the

recruiters would never have one of us. Yes, I smiled; for I saw that I had done wisely in all things, and that the Lord had, as I may say, prepared my way. It is a great satisfaction, Fritz, to see that everything prospers for you.

In the midst of these thoughts I reached Lutzelburg, and went into Brestal's, at the sign of the "Cigogne," to take a small cup of coffee. There I found Bernard, the soap-dealer—but you did not know him: he was a little man, with his head bald to the very poll, and covered all over with wens—and Donadieu, the keeper of the Forest of Harburg. One had placed his pack against the wall, and the other his gun; they were drinking a bottle of wine together. Brestal was helping them.

"Ah! it is you, Moses," cried Bernard; "where dost thou come from so early?" *

In these times the Christians were in the habit of thee-ing and thou-ing all Jews, even old men. I replied that I had come from Saverne through the valley.

"Ah! thou hast seen the wounded," said the keeper; "what thinkest thou of that, Moses?"

"Yes, I have seen them," I answered sadly; "I saw them last night. It is an awful sight."

"Everybody is up there now," said he; "because old dame Gredel, of the Quatre-Vents, has found her

* *Thee* and *thou* are used in France in speaking to little children, and between *very* intimate friends; also by superiors in addressing those who are much beneath them in the social scale.

nephew, Joseph Bertha—the little lame watchmaker, who was working last year at Father Goulden's—on one of the carts. All the folks of Dagsberg de la Hauppe and of Garburg fancy they will find their brothers, and sons, and cousins too." And he shrugged his shoulders with an air of compassion.

"These things are sad, it is true," said Brestal, "but they must needs be. For the last two years there has been no trade. I have got three thousand francs' worth of planks and poles there in my back-yard; formerly they would have lasted me just six months, and now they are rotting there. They are not wanted on the Loire,* they are not wanted in Alsace, there is no inquiry for anything, nobody buys anything. The inn is just the same. Nobody has a farthing to spend; every one stays at home, thankful to have potatoes to eat and cold water to drink. Meantime, my wine and my beer turn sour, and the cellar is covered with mildew. That does not prevent the bills from coming in; and you must pay, or the huissier † is upon you."

"Oh!" cried Bernard, "it is the same in everything. But what does the Emperor care whether we sell planks and soap or not, provided the duties are paid and the conscripts raised?"

Then Donadieu saw that his companion had taken a

* The traveller in France will not have failed to notice that wood for building and other purposes is formed into rafts and floated on the rivers to distant destinations.

† *Huissier* nearly corresponds to our sheriff's officer.

glass too much; so he rose, slung his gun behind him, and went out, saying, "Good day, friends, good day; we will talk of that some other time."

A few minutes after I paid for my cup of coffee and followed his example.

I thought just as Brestal and Bernard did. I did no business, either in old iron or old clothes; and as I walked along by the Côte des Baraques, I said to myself, —"Try if something else cannot be done, Moses. Everything is at a standstill. You can't live on your own money to the last farthing. You must look about you—you must think of something that always sells. But what will always sell? There is no trade that is not slack sometimes." I had been turning this over in my mind all the time I was coming through the Baraques du Bois-de-Chênes. I had just reached the level ground, from which you can see the glacis, the ramparts, and the bastions, when the firing of cannon announced that the Marshal was leaving the place. At the same time I saw on the left, at a distance in the direction of Mittelbronn, the line of swords, that shone like lightning between the poplars of the high-road. There were no leaves on the trees, and I could see also the carriage, with its postilions, flying along like the wind, in the midst of officers in cocked hats and waving feathers. The cannon fired every second, the mountains and valleys echoed every report; and I had seen that man the night before! I trembled to think of it; it seemed to me it must have been a dream. At last, about ten

o'clock, I passed the bridge at the French Gate. The last gun was being fired from the bastion of the powder-house. The people—men, women, and children—were coming down from the ramparts, delighted as if it had been a fête; they knew nothing, they thought of nothing. The cry of "Vive l'Empereur!" was heard in every street.

I made my way through the crowd, happy enough to have good news for my wife, and I kept on saying to myself as I went along, "He is a fine boy, Sarah." As I turned the corner of the market-place, I saw her standing at our door, and I flourished my stick in the air, as much as to say, "Baruch is safe, Baruch is safe." She understood me, and went in; but as she was going upstairs I overtook her, and I kissed her, and said, "He is a fine fellow, a beautiful child; so fat, so healthy! And Zeffen is going on well. Baruch told me to kiss you for him. Where is Sâfel?"

"He is selling in the market-place."

"That is well."

We went into our room, and I sat down and told all about Zeffen's boy. Sarah listened to me with delight, gazing at me with her large black eyes, and wiping my forehead, for I had walked fast, and was out of breath.

Then Sâfel came in, and I had not time to look round before he was on my knee with his hands in my pockets. The child knew that his sister Zeffen never forgot him, and Sarah took a bite of an apple too.

You see, Fritz, when I think of these things all comes back fresh, and if I were to tell you all I should never have done.

One Friday, the eve of Sabbath, the Schabbès-Goïe * was to come in the afternoon. While we were alone at dinner, and I was relating, for the fifth or sixth time, how Zimmer had recognized me, and taken me into the presence of the Duc de Bellune, my wife told me that the Marshal had been round the ramparts on horseback, with his staff; that he had inspected the advanced works, the bastions, and the glacis, and that as he came through the Rue du Collége he said the place would hold out eighteen days, and that the fortifications must be manned, and mounted with cannon.

"That man is sure that the enemy is coming, and he is going to place guns on the ramparts; he knows well enough they will be wanted. It would not be natural to make preparations for nothing."

"What shall we do when there is no trade? The country people will not be able to come into the town. What will become of us?"

It was then that Sarah showed me what manner of woman she was, for she said, "Moses, I have already thought of all this; the old iron, the old shoes, and all the rest, will only sell to the peasants. We must open a trade for the town—for all sorts of people

* *Schabbès-Goïe*—Christian woman hired to do works forbidden to be done by Jews on the Sabbath.

—one that will force the townsfolk, the soldiers, and the working-men to buy of us. That is what we must do."

I looked at her with surprise, and Sâfel leaned his elbows on the table and looked and listened too. "That is true enough, Sarah," said I; "but tell me, what can we sell that soldiers and citizens and everybody shall be obliged to buy of us?"

"Listen," said she: "If they shut the gates, and if the country people cannot come in, there will be no eggs, nor butter, nor fish in the market. People will be obliged to live on salt meat, beans, pease, and flour —things that will keep. Those who have a store of such provisions may sell them again at any price, and soon grow rich."

I was lost in wonder as I listened to her. "Oh, Sarah! Sarah!" I cried, "you have made me happy these thirty years past—yes, very happy—and I have said, a thousand times, the prudent woman is a pure and spotless jewel. The prudent woman is a treasure to her husband, I have said it a thousand times. But in this day, I see still better your great worth, and I value you the more for it."

The more I reflected on what she had said, the more I was convinced of the wisdom of her advice. At last I said, "Sarah, meat and flour, and such like, are stored in the magazines; the soldiers will have plenty for a long time—the military authorities have looked to that. But what will be wanted is brandy;

men want that when they are slaughtering and destroying each other in war; and brandy we will buy. We will have abundance in our cellars, and we shall sell it, for there will be none anywhere else. There is my opinion."

"It is a good idea, Moses," said she; "your reasons are good, and I approve of them."

"Then I will write," said I; "we will put all our money in spirits, and we will add water ourselves, in proportion to the price each one is willing to pay. In that way the carriage will cost us less than if we sent for brandy, and we need not pay for the carriage of water, for we have plenty of that here."

"It is well, Moses," said she. And so we agreed.

Then I said to Sâfel, "You will not tell anybody of this."

She answered for him, "There is no need, Moses, for you to tell him that; Sâfel knows that this is a secret, and that our prosperity depends on its being kept."

It was a long time before the boy forgave me for having said, "You will not tell anybody." Young as he was, he had plenty of sense, and he said to himself, "My father takes me for a fool." This idea mortified him. He told me so years after, and I saw I had been wrong. Every one has his talent; children have theirs, and it ought not to be mortified by their parents, but, on the contrary, encouraged by them.

III.

A CIRCUMCISION FEAST.

I WROTE, then, to Pézenas, a town in the South of France, rich in wool, in wine, and in brandy; and the price of the brandy at Pézenas regulates the price all over Europe. A man in trade ought to know that, and I knew it, for I always read the market prices in the newspapers. I sent to Monsieur Quataya of Pézenas for twelve pipes of spirits. I had calculated that, including the carriage, each pipe would cost me a thousand francs by the time it was in my cellar. As, during the last year, there was nothing to be done in the old-iron trade, I had sold as I could, but had not bought; so I did not mind paying the twelve thousand francs. Only, Fritz, these twelve thousand francs were the half of my fortune, and you cannot think what courage it required to risk on a single venture all I had gained in fifteen years.

As soon as my letter was gone I wanted to have it back again, but it was too late. I kept up a good

countenance to my wife, telling her it would be all right, and that we should gain double and treble. She kept up her countenance, too but we were both dreadfully afraid; and during the six weeks that were necessary for my letter to be received and acknowledged, for the completion of the order, and the arrival of the invoice, I woke every night thinking I was utterly ruined—the sweat poured off me; yet if any one had come and said to me, "Make yourself easy, Moses, I will take the business off your hands," I would have refused, for I was quite as anxious to gain as I was afraid to lose. And that is how you may know true traders, true generals, and all who act on their own responsibility; the rest are machines, who sell tobacco, draw glasses of brandy, or fire muskets, as the case may be.

When people talk of Austerlitz, of Jena, of Wagram, nobody says anything about Jean-Claude or Jean-Nicholas; you hear only of Napoleon—he alone risked everything, the rest only risked being killed. I do not say this to compare myself to Napoleon, but buying the twelve pipes of spirits was my battle of Austerlitz. And when I remember that on the Emperor's arrival at Paris, he asked for four hundred and forty millions of francs and *six hundred thousand men*, and that then everybody began to sell for any price they could get, while I, instead of being led away by their example, was buying—when I think of it, I am still proud of myself, for I must have had good courage.

In the midst of our anxieties, the day came for the circumcision of little Esdras. My daughter Zeffen was recovered, and Baruch had written to me not to come to Saverne, for that they would come to Phalsburg.

My wife hastened then to prepare the meats and cakes for the feast: the "bie-kou-gel," the "haman," and the "schlach moness," which are all dainty dishes. As for me, I had obtained the Rabbi Heymann's approval of my best wine, and I had invited my friends Leiser of Mittelbronn and his wife Boûné, Senterlé Hirsch, and the Professor Burguet. Burguet was not a Jew, but he deserved to be one, so full was he of intelligence and extraordinary talents. When the Emperor passed through the place, and a speech was wanted, Burguet drew it up; if songs for a national fête were required, Burguet composed them over a pot of beer; if a student was at a loss in his thesis, to pass as lawyer or doctor, he went straight to Burguet, who soon put it to rights, whether it was in French or in Latin; when the schoolmasters wanted to bring tears into the eyes of the parents at the distribution of the children's prizes, it was always Burguet that was chosen—he would take up a roll of blank paper, and read off such a discourse as another could not compose in ten years; if a petition were to be addressed to the Emperor, or even the prefect, Burguet was the man; and when Burguet would undertake the defence of a deserter before the council of war at the Mairie, the

deserter, instead of being shot on the bastion behind the barracks, was set at liberty.

And when all that was over, Burguet went to play a quiet game of piquet with the little Jew Solomon, lost always, and nobody troubled themselves any more about him.

I have often thought that Burguet must have thoroughly despised many of those to whom he took off his hat. To see fellows give themselves airs of importance, because they are garde champêtre, or secretary at the Mairie, must have made such a man smile. But if it did, he never said so; he was too much a man of the world for that. He had been a priest under the Constitution; he was tall, had a noble countenance, and a very fine voice; you could not help being struck even by the sound of it. Unfortunately he did not care for his own interests, he let himself be cheated by anybody. How often have I said to him, "Burguet, for heaven's sake, do not play cards with thieves! Burguet, do not let yourself be stripped of everything by fools. Give me the salary you receive from the Collége, and when they want to fleece you, send them to me; I will pay their bills, and give you the account." But he lived on in carelessness, and never thought of the future.

I had, then, invited all my old friends for the morning of November 24, and they every one came. The father and mother, with the little child, had arrived early, in a roomy carriage. By eleven o'clock the

ceremony had been performed in our synagogue, and all of us had returned with joy and satisfaction to my house, which had been prepared beforehand. In the best room, on the first floor, the large table was spread; it was ornamented with flowers and baskets of fruit, the meats were in pewter dishes, and we had begun to celebrate the day with suitable gaiety.

The old Rabbi Heymann, Leiser, and Burguet, were on my right; my Sâfel, Hirsch, and Baruch, on my left, and the women, Sarah, Zeffen, Jételé and Boûné, opposite, according to the ordinance of the Lord, that men and women shall be separate at the feasts, because of the heat of the blood and of the good wine.

Burguet's appearance, with his white cravat, his handsome coat, and his frilled shirt, did me honour. As he spoke, he raised his voice, and his gestures were noble; he conversed of the ancient customs of our nation, of our religious ceremonies, of the Paeçach,* of the Rosh-haschaunah,† of the "Kippour," ‡ like a real "Jed," § saying that our religion was beautiful, and glorifying the learning of Moses. He knew the Lochene Koïdech ‖ as well as a "balkebolè." ¶ The people from Saverne asked their neighbours, in a whisper, who the man could be that spoke with such authority and so well? "Is he a rabbi? Is he a 'schmess,'** or is he the 'parness' †† of your community?" And

* Easter.
† New Year's Day.
‡ Day of Expiations.
§ Jew.
‖ Chaldee.
¶ Doctor.
** Jewish beadle.
†† Civil head of a Jewish community.

when they heard that he was not one of ourselves, they wondered. The old Rabbi Heymann was the only one who could answer him, and they agreed in everything, like learned men who are speaking of things that are known, and who respect each other's attainments.

Behind us, under the curtains of his grandmother's bed, our little Esdras was sleeping. His face was sweet, his little hands were shut; he slept so soundly that neither the bursts of laughter, the talking, nor the clinking of the glasses disturbed him. Sometimes one and then another went to look at him, and every one said, "It is a beautiful child! He is like his grandfather Moses." I was naturally pleased to hear them; I went to look at him too, and I hung over him long, for I thought he was much more like my father.

About three o'clock, the dishes having been removed, and the sweetmeats and dessert put on the table, I went to the cellar to fetch a bottle of better wine, an old bottle of Roussillon, which I got out from under the others, all covered with dust and cobwebs. I took it up very gently, and placed it on the table, in the midst of the flowers, saying, "You said the other wine was good; I wonder what you will think of this."

Then Burguet smiled, for old wine was his delight. He stretched out his hand over it, and exclaimed, "O noble wine! consoler, restorer, and benefactor of man in this vale of tears! O venerable bottle, thou bearest unmistakable signs of an ancient nobility!" He spoke with his mouth full, and everybody laughed.

Then I told Sarah to go and fetch the corkscrew. But just as she was getting up, the trumpets sounded without, and every one listened, saying, "What is that?"

At the same moment, a number of horses dashed up the street; the ground and the houses shook, as under the passing of a heavy weight. Everybody rose from table, throwing their dinner-napkins behind them, and rushed to the windows. And behold, from the Gate of France to the Place, artillerymen, with their shakos covered with oil-cloth and their saddles with sheep-skins, were coming on, and behind them waggon-loads of shot, shell, and tools for throwing up earthworks. Fancy, Fritz, what I felt at that moment!

"This is war, my friends," said Burguet—"this is war; it is coming—it is near. It is our turn to bear it now, after twenty years."

As I leaned on my hand, I thought, "The enemy will be here directly. These troops are sent to fortify the place, and what will become of me if the allies surround us before I have received my brandy? What will become of me if the Russians or the Austrians stop the waggons and take the spirits? I shall be obliged to pay all the same, and I shall not have a farthing in the world." I turned pale as I thought of it. Sarah thought as I did, no doubt; she looked at me but said nothing. We stayed at the window till all had gone past. The street was full of people. Some old soldiers —Desmarets the Egyptian, Paradis the gunner, Rolfo,

Faisard the sapper of Beresina, as he was called, and some others—cried, "Vive l'Empereur!"

The children ran after the waggons, crying, "Vive l'Empereur!" too; but the people, with their lips tightly closed, and their faces full of thought, looked on in silence. When the last waggon had turned Fouquet's corner, the crowd went to their homes dispirited; and we, in our room, looked at one another, but had no inclination to continue the feast.

"You are not well, Moses," said Burguet; "what is the matter with you?"

"I am thinking of all the miseries that are coming on the town."

"Oh, never fear," answered he; "it will be put into a thorough state of defence, and we must trust to the mercy of God for the rest. What cannot be helped must be borne. Come, let us sit down; this old wine will raise our spirits."

Each then resumed his place. I drew the cork, and it was as Burguet said—the old Roussillon did us good, and we once more began to be merry.

Burguet cried, "Here's to the health of the little Esdras. May the Lord lead him in His right hand!"

All touched glasses, and they said, "May he live long to be the joy of Moses his grandfather, and Sarah his grandmother! To their health!"

We even began at last to look on the bright side of things, and to laud the Emperor, who had lost no time in providing for our defence, and who would soon exter-

minate all those rascals on the other side of the Rhine. Nevertheless, when the party broke up, at five o'clock, every one was grave, and Burguet himself seemed thoughtful when he shook hands with me at the bottom of the stairs. "We shall have to send all the pupils home to their friends," said he, "and remain idle." The people from Saverne, Zeffen, Baruch, and the children, got into the carriage in which they had come, and started homeward without cracking the whip.

IV.

FATHER MOSES COMPELLED TO BEAR ARMS.

But this, Fritz, was only the beginning; greater miseries were to come. You should have seen the town next day at eleven o'clock, when the engineers made the inspection of the ramparts, and reports were spread that there were to be seventy-two platforms within the bastions; three bomb-proof block-houses, capable of holding thirty men each, on either side of the German Gate, ten stockades, forming an entrenchment, and an exercising ground for forty men; four blindages on the Place de la Mairie, affording cover to one hundred men each: and when we were told that the townsmen themselves were to labour at all these constructions, and to find their own shovels, pick-axes, and wheel-barrows, and that the peasants were to bring in trees with their own horses.

Neither Sarah nor Sâfel nor I knew even what blindages and stockades were; we inquired of our neighbour, the old gunsmith, Bailly, what use they

could be: he laughed and said, "You will find that out, neighbour, when the balls and bombs are flying about. It would take too long to explain; you will see in good time. It is never too late to learn."

Fancy the looks of the people! I recollect that every one was hastening to the place where our Maire, the Baron Parmentier, was making a speech. We went with the rest; Sarah had hold of my arm, and Sâfel of the tail of my coat.

There, in front of the Mairie, all the town, men, women, and children, were standing in a half-circle, listening in the deepest silence; but every now and then they cried, "Vive l'Empereur!" all together.

Parmentier, a tall, thin man, with his sky-blue, swallow-tailed coat, and his white cravat, and begirt with the tricoloured scarf,* was standing at the top of the steps of the guard-house, and the members of the town council were standing behind him. "Phalsburgians!" said he, "the time is come to show your attachment to the Emperor. Last year all Europe was marching with us, now all Europe is marching against us. We should have everything to fear, did we not count on the energy and prowess of the nation. He who should shrink from his duty at this time, would be a traitor to his country. Men of Phalsburg! show what you are. Remember that your children have been slain by the treason of the allies. Revenge their death!

* This scarf is always worn in the discharge of official duties.

Let every one obey the military authority, for the sake of France."

It made one's blood run cold only to hear him, and I thought to myself, "The spirits will never get here in time, that is clear. The allies are on the march."

Elias, the butcher, and Kalmes Lévy, the mercer, were standing near me. Instead of crying, "Vive l'Empereur!" like the rest, they were saying to each other, "It is all very fine! but we are not barons; let the barons and counts and dukes defend themselves; what business is it of ours?"

But all the old soldiers, and especially those of the Republic, old Goulden the watchmaker, and Desmarets the Egyptian, bald-headed old men, with scarcely a tooth left, said the Maire was right, and they shouted "Vive la France!—we must fight to the death."

I saw many looking askance at Lévy, and I whispered to him, "For heaven's sake hold your tongue, Kalmes; they will tear you to pieces." And it was true enough; these old fellows glanced at him ominously, pale with rage, and their very cheeks quivering.

Then Kalmes said no more, he even made his way out of the press, to return home, but Elias stayed till the end of the speech; and as the crowd were going down the High Street, shouting, "Vive l'Empereur!" he could not restrain himself from saying to the old watchmaker, "How is it, Mr. Goulden, that, reasonable as you are, and having never wanted or received anything from the Emperor, you say we must give our

support to him—that we must fight to the death? Is it our trade to be soldiers? Have we not given soldiers enough to the Empire in the last ten years? Have not enough been killed? Must we give more of our blood for the maintenance of barons and counts and dukes—— ?"

Mr. Goulden would not let him finish, but turned round upon him indignantly: "Listen to me, Elias, and try to keep quiet. There is no need at this moment to ask who is right and who is wrong. The question is, the safety of France. I warn you that if you discourage others by your example, it will be the worse for you. You may take my word for it. Go."

By this time some old soldiers had collected round us, and Elias had but just time to make his way to the narrow lane opposite, in which he lived.

From that day orders, perquisitions, forced labour, domiciliary visits, for tools, wheelbarrows, and what not, followed each other without interruption. Your house was no longer your own; the officers assumed all the authority, and you would have said everything belonged to them. It is true, they gave you a receipt. Every tool I had in my shop was in use on the ramparts; fortunately I had sold a good many before; for these notes in exchange for my merchandise would have been the ruin of me.

From time to time the Maire made a speech, and the Governor, a fat man with a face covered with pimples, expressed his satisfaction at the conduct of

the tradesmen; we were obliged to take that in the place of money.

When it came to my turn to take the pickaxe and drive the wheelbarrow, I got Carabin the surveyor to take my place for thirty sous. Oh, what wretchedness!—there never will be the like again. While the Governor gave orders within the town, the soldiers were actively employed without, in escorting the peasants. The road from Lutzelburg was full of vehicles, all loaded with old oaks, that were to serve for constructing the block-houses; they are formed of trunks of trees, with other trunks laid across them to form the roof, the whole thickly covered with earth. Shot and shell may fall on it, but nothing comes through, as I had occasion to observe afterwards. And besides, these trees were used for rows of enormous pointed stakes, pierced for musketry—these were the stockades.

It seems to me I can still hear the cries of the peasants, the neighing of the horses, the cracking of whips, and all the noises that ceased not day or night. My only consolation was to think, "If the brandy comes now, it will be well defended; neither Austrians, Russians, nor Prussians will drink it here." Sarah expected to receive the letter of advice morning after morning.

One day—it was the Sabbath—we had the curiosity to go and see the works. Every one was talking about them, and Sâfel came in every few minutes, saying, "The works are getting on—they are filling the shells

in front of the arsenal, they have taken out the cannon, and are mounting them on the ramparts."

There was no keeping the boy still. He had nothing to sell in the market, and could not be easy at home; so he ran all over the town, and brought us all the news.

That day, then, when we heard that they had mounted forty-two guns, and were going on with the works on the bastion behind the barracks, I told Sarah to put on her shawl, and that we would go and see.

We went down to the French Gate. Hundreds of wheelbarrows were being driven up the ascent of the bastion, from which you see the road to Metz on the right, and that to Paris on the left. On the top, a great number of men, soldiers and citizens, were throwing up a mound of earth in the form of a triangle, at least twenty-five feet high, two hundred long, and as many wide.

An officer of engineers had discovered with his glass that from the brow of the hill opposite the enemy could command this bastion, and all these people were labouring in order that two pieces might be mounted behind the parapet so as to sweep the point.

The same thing had been done everywhere. The interiors of the bastions with their platforms were enclosed by earthworks, seven feet high, just like rooms. Nothing could fall there unless it dropped from the sky. Through the gazon * narrow openings were cut, which

* A term used in fortification.

grew larger outwardly like funnels. The muzzles of the cannon were brought to these openings, and they could be advanced, and worked in all directions, by means of immense levers applied to the afterpart of the enormous carriages on which they were mounted. I had not then heard these forty-eight-pounders, but only to see them on the battery gave me a terrible notion of their power. "It is beautiful, Moses," said Sarah; "it is well done." And so it was, for in the interior of the bastions not even a weed was to be seen; and at the sides there were sacks full of earth piled up to cover the gunners.

What labour lost! And then to think that every charge of these great guns costs, at least, a louis. What money spent to kill our fellow-creatures! However, the people laboured at these constructions with more enthusiasm than at a harvest-home. I have often thought since, that if the French took as much trouble, and employed as much intelligence and courage, in the works of peace, they would be the richest and happiest people in the world. Ay, they would long ago have surpassed the English and the Americans. But when they have laboured hard, made good roads, built bridges, dug harbours and canals, and money is flowing in on all sides, they are suddenly seized with the rage for war, and in the course of three or four years they go to rack and ruin, with their grand armies, their cannons, cannon-balls, and gunpowder, and behold them poorer than before. A handful of soldiers rule over them,

and look down upon them; and that is all they get by it.

In the midst of all this, news was constantly coming in from Mayence, Strasburg, or Paris, and you could not pass through the street without meeting an estafette. They all pulled up before the Maison Bockholtz, near the German Gate, where the Governor was lodged. There was soon a circle formed round man and horse, and reports spread through the town that the allies were concentrating their forces at Frankfort; that our troops held the islands of the Rhine; that the conscripts of 1803 to those of 1814 were recalled, and that those of 1815 were to form the reserve at Metz, Bordeaux, and Turin; that the deputies were about to meet there; that the gates had been shut against them, and so on.

There came also a sort of smugglers from Graufthal, from Pirmasens, and Kaiserslauten, with Franz-Sepel, the one-armed man, at their head; and others from the surrounding villages, who talked in secret of the proclamations of Alexander, Francis Joseph, and Frederick William, setting forth "that they warred not against France, but the Emperor only, to hinder him from longer destroying the repose of Europe." They talked of the abolition of some taxes and the levying of others, so that, by the time night came, people did not know what to think.

But one fine day it was all made clear enough. It was the 8th or the 9th of December. I had just got up, and was dressing, when I heard the drum beat at the

corner of the High Street. It was very cold, but nevertheless I opened the window, and leaned out to hear the order of the day. Parmentier was unfolding his paper. The young Engelheider went on beating his drum, and the people assembled. Then Parmentier read that, by order of the Governor of the place, all the inhabitants were to present themselves at the Mairie without fail, between the hours of eight in the morning and six in the evening, to receive their guns and cartridge-boxes, and that those who should absent themselves would be summoned before the court-martial.

This was the finishing stroke. Every man able to march was already in the army, the old men were in the garrisons, and now, sober men, townsfolk, people used to live quietly at home and to mind their business, were to man the ramparts and risk their lives day after day.

Sarah looked at me in silence, and indignation prevented me from speaking. It was not till a quarter of an hour after, when I had finished dressing, that I said, "Get the soup ready, I am going to the Mairie for my musket and cartridges."

Then she exclaimed, "Oh, Moses, who would ever have thought that you would be obliged to fight at your age? Oh, what a dreadful thing!"

And I replied, "It is the will of the Almighty." Then I went out, very wretched. Sâfel followed me. Just as I reached the corner of the market-place, I met Burguet coming down the steps of the Mairie, which

was thronged with people; he had got his musket, and began to laugh, saying, "Well, Moses, we are going to be like the Maccabees in our old age."

His good humour raised my spirits, and I answered, "Burguet, why they should take quiet folk, fathers of families, just to go and get killed, I cannot understand; there is no sense in it."

"Oh," said he, "what are they to do? When there is no white bread, we must eat brown." And as I did not smile at his jokes, he said, "Come, Moses, do not be cast down: all this is merely for form's sake, there are plenty of troops for active service; all we shall have to do, is to mount guard. If sallies are to be made, or an attack repulsed, they will not want you; you are too old to scour the country or charge with the bayonet; you are bald, and your beard is grey. Make yourself easy."

"Yes, it is very true, Burguet," replied I; "I am feeble, more so perhaps than you think."

"It is easy to see that," said he; "but go and get your musket and cartridge-box."

"Shall we go to live in the barracks?" I asked.

"No no," said he, bursting out laughing, "we shall live quietly at our own homes." Then he shook hands with me, and I went in under the porch of the Mairie. The staircase was full of people, and the names were being called. You should have seen, Fritz, the looks of Robinot, Gourdier, Mariner, and a lot of tilers and plasterers, and house-painters, fellows who at any other

time would take off their caps to you and beg for work —you should have seen how they drew themselves up as one passed, looking at one with contempt, whistling through their fingers and crying out, "Hallo, Moses, is it thee? thou wilt make a fine trooper. Ha, ha, ha! They will cut thy moustaches down according to regulation," and similar insults.

Yes, everything was changed: these old soldiers were already nominated sergeants, sergeant-majors, and corporals, and we were nothing at all. War turns everything upside down—the first are last, and the last first. Common sense goes for nothing, discipline is all in all; the fellow that scoured your floor yesterday, because he was too great a fool for any other employment, becomes your sergeant, and if he tells you black is white, you dare not contradict him.

At last, after I had been waiting an hour, they called, "Moses!" and I went up.

The great hall upstairs was full of people; they cried out, "Come along, Moses; are you coming, Moses? Ah, here he is; he is one of the Old Guard. Just look at him! see what a fine fellow he is! Thou shalt be our standard-bearer, Moses; thou shalt lead us to victory!"

And then these idiots nudged each other, and grinned. I went by without speaking, or even looking at them. In the room at the end, where they drew for the conscription, the Governor, Moulin; the Commandant, Petitgenet; the Maire; the Maire's secretary,

Frichard; Rollin, the captain of the clothing department, and six or seven other superannuated officers, crippled with rheumatisms contracted in the four quarters of the world, were in council, some sitting down, some standing.

These old men began to laugh as soon as I came in. I heard them say, "That's a fine strong fellow, just what we want," and so on. I thought, "You may say what you like, you will never persuade me that you are fine young men of twenty yourselves."

But I said nothing. All of a sudden the Governor, who had been talking to the Maire in a corner, turned round with his hat all on one side, and looking at me, he said, "What poor old soul is that? You see he can hardly stand on his legs." Then, in spite of everything, I was pleased, and I began to cough. "That will do," said he; "go home and nurse your cold."

I had already taken some steps towards the door, when the Maire's secretary, Frichard, exclaimed, "It is Moses—Moses the Jew, colonel, who has packed off his two sons to America, or else the eldest would have been in the service." That rascal Frichard had a spite against me; we both dealt in old clothes in the market-place, and the peasants almost always gave me the preference. He would have killed me if he could, and that was why he denounced me.

Then the Governor called after me, "Stop a minute! Ah, you old fox! you send your sons to America, do

you, out of the way of the conscription? Give him a musket, a cartridge-box, and a bayonet."

My rage against Frichard nearly choked me. I wanted to speak, but the scamp sat laughing at his desk, and writing all the time; so I followed the gendarme Werner into a side-room, full of guns and swords and cartridge-boxes. Werner himself hung the cartridge-box over my shoulders, and put a musket into my hands, saying, "Go along, Moses, and take care always to answer to the muster-roll."

I came down through the crowd in such a fury that I no longer heard the laughter of the rabble. When I got home, I told Sarah what had happened to me; she listened, pale with rage. After a moment's silence, she said, "That Frichard is the enemy of our race—a foe to Israel; he detests us, I know it. But say nothing for the present; do not let him know of your vexation, he would be delighted at it. But you shall have your revenge later. The time will come, and if it is not you, it will be your children, it will be your grandchildren; they shall know all that this wretch has done against their grandfather. They shall know it." She clenched her hands. Sâfel had been listening to her.

It was the greatest consolation she could have offered me. I thought exactly as she did, but my rage was so great, that I would have given half my goods to ruin the scoundrel. Twenty times in the day, and even in the night, I cried out, "Ah, the vagabond!

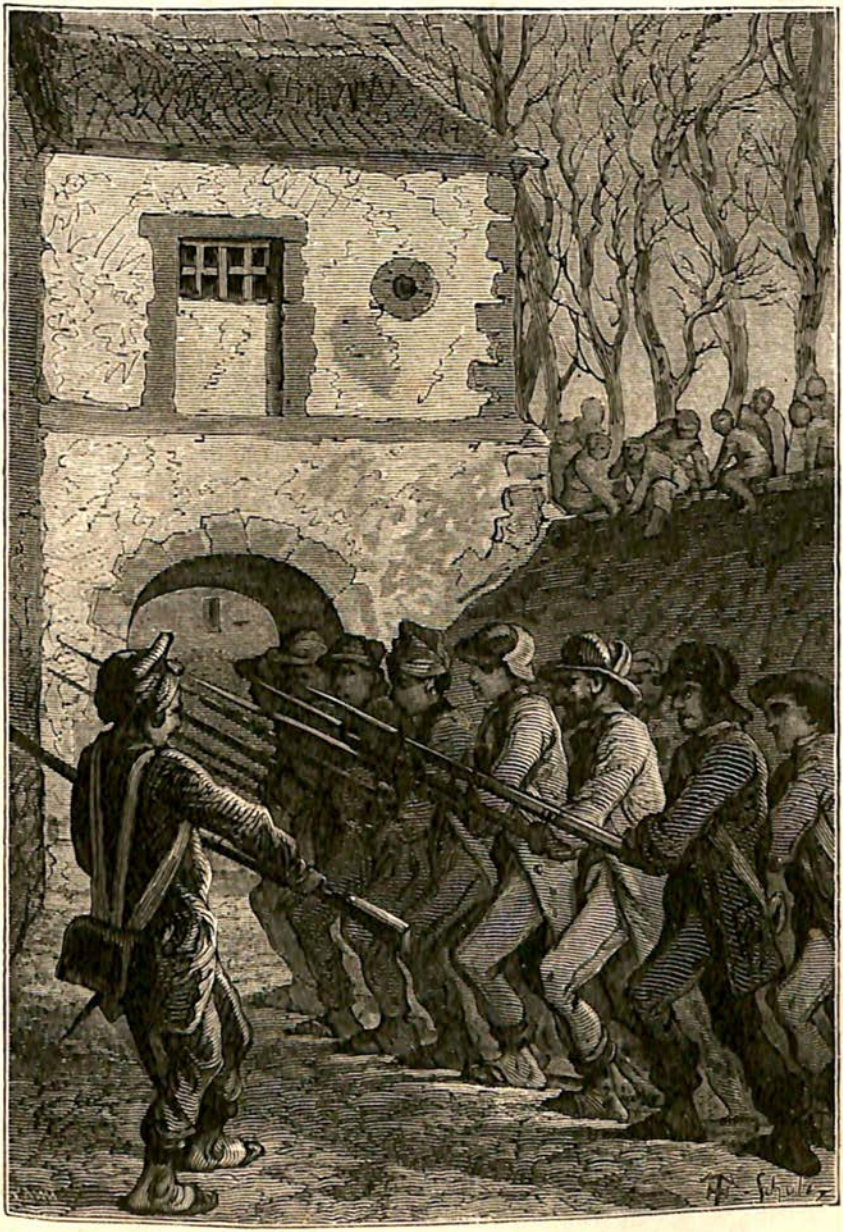
I was out of it. They told me to go home. He is the cause of all my trouble." You cannot form an idea, Fritz, what malice I have always borne that man. Neither my wife nor I have ever forgotten what he did against us; never will my children forget.

V.

FATHER MOSES RECEIVES WELCOME NEWS.

THE next morning, everybody was to answer to their names in front of the Mairie. All the boys in the town ran after us. The blindages of the exercising-ground were not yet finished, so we went to learn the exercise in the large court of the Collége. The pupils had all been sent home, so the place was free. Fancy this great court full of townsmen in their usual dress, forced to obey tinkers, sweeps, and stable-men, now become corporals, sergeants, and sergeant-majors. Fancy peaceable men in batches of four, six, or ten, learning to step together: "One, two—one, two;" "Halt;" "Fix bayonets;" and the drill-sergeant marching behind, scowling and insulting you in every possible way.

"Moses, down with thy shoulders!" "Moses, bring thy nose in line!" "Moses, shoulder arms!" "Ah, old stupid, thou wilt never be good for anything. How can any one be such an ass at thy age? Look!



p. 46.

canst not do that? 'One, two.' What an old owl! Once more—'Shoulder arms!'"

That is the way, Fritz, that my own cobbler, Monborne, ordered me about. I do believe he would have thrashed me if Captain Vigneron had not forbidden him. The others treated their old masters just the same. One would have thought it was a thing that was to last for ever, that they were to be always sergeants and we always soldiers. I had gall and bitterness enough in my heart against this rabble to last fifty years. In a word, they were our masters; and the only time in my life I ever struck my boy Sâfel, it was that vagabond Monborne's fault. The boys had climbed on the wall to see us, and to make fun of us. When I looked up, I saw Sâfel among them, and I shook my finger at him angrily. He got down immediately; but at the conclusion of the exercise, when they told us to break the ranks, before the Hôtel de Ville, just as he was coming up, I was seized with a fit of anger, and gave him a sound box on the ear, saying, "Go and laugh at your father again, as Ham did, instead of bringing a mantle to cover his shame. Go."

He wept bitterly, and was weeping still when we got home. When Sarah saw me come in quite pale, and the boy following at a distance, in tears, she came down to know what was the matter. I told her how angry I had been, and then I went upstairs. Sarah said a great deal more to Sâfel, and he came and

begged my pardon; so I forgave him with all my heart, as you may suppose.

When I reflected that the exercise must be gone through every day, I was ready to give up everything, if I only could have carried my house and my merchandise with me. Ay, indeed, I know of nothing worse than to be commanded by rogues, who keep no terms with you when chance lifts them for a moment above their natural place.

But I could talk for ever on this subject, so I will speak of something else. The Lord had reserved a great consolation for me. I had scarcely put my musket and cartridge-box in the corner, when Sarah gave me a letter, saying with a smile, "Read that, Moses; it will put you in good humour."

I opened it and read it. It was the letter of advice from Pézenas, to say that my twelve pipes of spirits were on the road.

Then I breathed again. "Ah, it is all right now," I said; "the spirits will be here in three weeks. There is no stir in the direction of Strasburg or of Sarrebrück; the allies are concentrating, but they are not in motion. My brandy is safe! we shall sell it well. It will be a famous stroke of business."

I began to laugh, and was quite myself again, when Sarah, pushing the arm-chair towards me, said, "And now, Moses, what do you think of that?" At the same time she handed me a second letter, covered all over with postage-marks; and at the first glance

I saw it was the writing of my sons Fromel and Itzig.

It was a letter from America. My heart overflowed with joy, and I began to praise the Lord within myself —silently—so much happiness had made me speechless. I said, "The Lord is great, His knowledge is infinite; a mighty man is not delivered by much strength; and a horse is a vain thing for safety; but the eye of the Lord is upon them that hope in His mercy." Thus I said to myself, while I was reading the letter, in which my sons sang the praises of America, the true land of commerce, the land of speculators, where all is free, where there are no taxes nor excise duties, because there men are not bred up to war, but peace; the country, Fritz, where every one becomes whatever he deserves to be, either by his labour, his intelligence, or his frugality, where everything is in its place, because nothing serious can be decided without consulting the will of all, which is a just thing—where all contribute, all ought to give their opinion.

This was one of the first letters. Fromel and Itzig said in it, that they had gained so much money in one year, that they did not now carry their packs themselves, but that they had three fine mules, and that they were going to open a store for exchanging the hides, that were so abundant in that country, against European manufactured goods. Everything went well with them, and they were respected by everybody in the town and neighbourhood. When Fromel was travelling with

the three mules, Itzig stayed at home ; and when Itzig took his journey in town, his brother kept the store.

They knew of all our miseries, and blessed the name of the Lord, who had given them parents like us, to save them from destruction. They wanted us to go out to them; and after what had happened to me, after being insulted by a fellow like Monborne, I should have been glad enough to be there. But it was something to receive such good news, and in spite of all our misfortunes, whenever I thought of Frichard, I could not help saying, "After all, Frichard, thou art but a fool to me. Thou mayest annoy me, but thou canst not injure my boys. Thou wilt never be anything better than a miserable mayor's clerk, but I shall sell my brandy, and gain double and triple. Sâfel shall stand close to thee in the market-place, and when he sees any one going into thy shop, he shall make them a sign to come into his, and he shall sell to them at cost price, rather than let them go away, and thou wilt be ready to die with rage."

The tears came into my eyes when I thought of it, and I ended by kissing Sarah, who laughed, and could scarcely tell how to contain her delight. We forgave Sâfel over again, and he promised us never to keep company with the Christians. After dinner I went down to my cellar ; it was one of the finest in the town; it was twelve feet high and thirty-five feet long, all built of hewn stone. It ran under the High Street, and was as dry as an oven, and improved the quality of the wines.

As my spirits might arrive before the end of the month, I arranged four great stands for them, and made sure that the well at the end, which was bored in the rock, had plenty of water for the mixing. As I was coming up, about four o'clock, I perceived the old architect, Krômer, crossing the market-place, with his mètre * under his arm.

"Come in, and look at my cellar," I said to him; "do you think it will hold good against the bombs?"

We went down together; he looked at it, measured the thickness of the stone-work with his rule, and then said, "You have six feet thick of earth above the key-stone; when the bombs get in here, Moses, it will be all over with us. You may make yourself easy, I assure you." So we drew a good glass of wine from the wood, and came up, merry enough.

Just as we got to the top, the door of the house in front of us was violently thrown open, and at the same time some panes of glass were broken. Krômer said, "Look over there, Moses; what is going on on Camus's steps?"

So we stopped, and at the top of the steps, which had a rail on each side, a veteran sergeant, in his great-coat, and his musket hanging from his shoulder, was dragging Camus out by the collar. The poor old man caught tight hold of the door with both hands, to save himself from rolling down. At last

* Foot-measure. The French mètre is a little over the English yard, the foot somewhat longer.

he got away, with the loss of his collar, and then the door was shut with a noise like a clap of thunder.

"If the townsmen and the troops begin to quarrel," said Krômer, "the Germans and Russians will have a fine chance."

The sergeant, finding that the door was bolted inside, tried to burst it open with the butt-end of his musket; and made such a noise, that all the neighbours came running out, and all the dogs began to bark. We were still looking on, when Burguet came out of the passage opposite, and began to talk to the sergeant. At first he did not appear to listen, but after a few minutes he shouldered his musket and came down the street past us, as furious as a wild boar. He was a bronzed veteran with three chevrons * on his sleeve, his moustaches were grey, his cheeks wrinkled, his chin square. He muttered as he went, and entered the little inn of the "Three Pigeons."

Burguet, with his hat pulled down to his eyebrows, his great-coat collar pulled up to his ears, and his hands in his pockets, was following him at a distance.

"Well," I called out to him, "what has been the matter at Camus's?"

"Oh," said he, "Sergeant Trubert, of the 5th company of Veterans, has been at his old trade. That old fellow wants to carry everything with a high hand. During the last fortnight he has been quartered on five different people, and nobody can get on with him.

* Good-conduct stripes.

Every one has made a complaint of him; but he had always reasons to give, which the Governor and the Commandant said were very good."

"But what was it at Camus's?"

"Camus has only just room for his family. He wanted to send the sergeant to the inn, but Trubert had already made choice of Camus's own bed, and spread his great-coat over it, to lie down, saying, 'My billet is for this house, and it suits me, and I shall not go anywhere else.' Camus got angry, and finally, as you saw, the sergeant tried to drag him out of his house to thrash him."

Burguet laughed, but Krômer said, "Yes, we laugh; but think what deeds such men must needs have done on the other side of the Rhine!"

"Ah!" said Burguet, "the Germans had a miserable time of it, no doubt. But it is time to go and read the newspaper. God grant that our day of reckoning be not come yet. Good-morning, gentlemen." He went on towards the Place; Krômer took his road homeward, and I locked the two doors of my cellar, and went into the house.

That was on the 10th of December. It was already very cold. By five or six o'clock in the evening, the streets were covered with hoar-frost. Nothing was stirring abroad, for everybody was glad to keep at home, and sit round the stove. I found Sarah in the kitchen, busy preparing the supper. The red flames encircled the pot on the hearth. This is what I see, Fritz: my

wife washing dishes at the sink, close to the little window; my little Sâfel playing on a tin pipe, his cheeks as round as an apple, his curly hair all of a frizz; and I myself sitting quietly on a stool, with a bit of half-burnt wood in my hand, lighting my pipe; I see it all, just as if it had been yesterday.

We none of us spoke. We were happy enough, thinking of the brandy that was coming, of the prosperity of our sons, and of the good supper that was cooking. Who would ever have thought at that moment, that twenty-five days after, the town would be surrounded by enemies, and the bombs hissing through the air?

VI.

A DISAGREEABLE GUEST.

Now, Fritz, I am going to tell you of something that has often made me think that the Lord does order our affairs, and that all He does is for the best. At first we are ready to complain, and we cry, "Lord, have mercy upon us!" But after awhile, we are surprised to find that all has gone well.

You know that Frichard, the Maire's secretary, had a grudge against me. He was a little, thin old man; his skin was yellow, his ears flat, his cheeks hollow, and he wore a red wig. This vagabond was always seeking to injure me, and he soon found the opportunity. In dread of the blockade, every one was endeavouring to sell; the day after I had received the good news from America—it was a Friday, and market-day—there were so many from Alsace and Lorraine, with panniers and baskets full of eggs, butter, cheese, and poultry, that one could not move. They all wanted to turn their goods into money, to hide it either in their cellars or

under a tree in the wood. You know that large sums were lost at that time, and that every year treasure is found at the foot of some oak or beech, which was buried there in the fear that the Germans and Russians were coming to plunder and destroy everything, as we had done in their country. The people who hid the money are dead, or else have not been able to find the hiding-place again, and so the treasure has remained under ground.

That day—it was the 11th of December—it was dreadfully cold, the frost got into your very bones, but it did not snow as yet. I got up very early, shivering all the time, and came down with my flannel shirt buttoned up to my throat, and my warm fur cap on my head. The small Place and the great one were already swarming with people, bawling and haggling over the prices of their goods. I had no sooner opened my door, and hung up my great pair of scales, than a crowd of peasants collected; some wanted nails, some iron for the forge, and some brought their old iron, in hopes of selling it. They knew well enough that if the enemy came, there would be no means of entering into the town, and that was why they all came, some to sell, others to buy. So I opened the shutters, and began to weigh. The patrols were going their rounds; the guard was doubled at every point, and the drawbridges in good order. The state of siege was not yet declared, but we expected it would be, every hour. The last news from Mayence, Sarrebrück, and Strasburg, was that the

allies had reached the banks of the Rhine. My mind ran on nothing but my spirits; all the time I was weighing and selling, and taking money, that thought never left me for a moment. I had been busy for about an hour, when all of a sudden Burguet came up behind the crowd of peasants at my door, and said, "Moses, come here a moment, I have something to tell you." I came out. "Let us go down your passage," said he.

I was quite astonished, for he looked grave. The peasants called after us, "Make haste, Moses, we have no time to lose." But I did not attend to them. When we were in the passage, Burguet said to me, "I have just come from the Mairie; they are drawing up a report to the Préfet on the temper of our population, and I have just heard by chance that the Sergeant Trubert is to be billeted on you."

It was a terrible stroke, and I exclaimed, "I will not have him; I will not have him! During the last fortnight, I have had no less than six men; it is not my turn."

He answered, "Keep yourself quiet, and do not speak so loud; you will only make bad worse."

But I repeated, "Never! that sergeant shall never come into my house. It is a shame. A man like me, who has never done any harm to anybody, who only wants to live in peace." And as I was talking as loud as I could, Sarah, with her basket on her arm, ready to go to market, came downstairs, and asked what was the matter. Then Burguet said, "I will tell you, Madame

Sarah, and I hope you will be more reasonable than your husband. I do not wonder at his being angry; but when a thing cannot be helped, we must submit to it. Frichard has a spite against you; he is the secretary at the Mairie, and it is he who has the distribution of the billets. Well, he is going to send you Sergeant Trubert, a bad, violent man, I admit, but who must be lodged, as well as another. To everything I could say for you, Frichard replied, 'Moses is rich. He has cheated the conscription, he has sent his sons away; he ought to pay for it.' The Maire and the Governor said he was quite right. So—you see, I speak to you as a friend—the more you stand out, the more the sergeant will annoy you, and the more Frichard will be pleased; you cannot help yourselves. Be reasonable."

My anger was greater than ever when I heard that I owed all these troubles to Frichard. I was going to cry out, but my wife laid her hand on my arm, saying, "Let me speak, Moses. Monsieur Burguet is right, and I thank him for having given us warning. Frichard has a spite against us. Let it be so. We shall settle accounts some day. Now, when is the sergeant to come?"

"At noon," replied Burguet.

"It is well," said my wife. "He has a right to lodging, fire, and candle—we cannot refuse it, but Frichard shall pay for it." She was pale with rage, and I listened to her, for I saw she was right. "Keep

quiet, Moses," she said to me afterwards; "do not scream out. Let me manage."

"Well, now, that is what I had to tell you," said Burguet; "it is an abominable trick of Frichard's. I will see after a little while whether there be any possibility of ridding you of the sergeant. Now I must return to my post."

Sarah set out for the market, Burguet shook hands with me, and, as the peasants were calling for me louder than ever, I was obliged to go back to my scales.

I was furious. I sold more than two hundred francs' worth of iron that day, but my rage against Frichard and my fear of the sergeant took away all the pleasure. If I had sold twenty times as much, it would have been all the same. "Ah, the villain!" said I to my wife; "he will not let me have a moment's peace. I shall never be happy in the town any more."

By noon the market was over, and the country people taking their way through the Gate of France; so I shut up my shop, and went upstairs, thinking, "I shall no longer be anything in my own house. This Trubert will be the master here. He will treat me just as if we were Germans or Spaniards."

I was perfectly miserable. But in the midst of my misery I smelt a savoury odour coming from the kitchen, and I started up, quite surprised, for there was a smell of fish and roast-meat, just as if it had been a feast-day. I was going to open the door, when Sarah looked in, saying, "Go into your dressing-room, smoothe your

beard, and put on a clean shirt." I noticed that she was dressed with her earrings, her green petticoat, and her scarlet handkerchief, as if it had been the Sabbath.

"What should I dress myself for, Sarah?" I asked.

"Never mind; but make haste, for we have no time to lose," replied she. That woman had so much good sense, and had so often got us out of trouble by her quick wit, that I said nothing, but went into my room to do as she told me.

As I was dressing, I heard Sâfel say, "That's he!—there he is!"

Then I heard footsteps coming upstairs, and a rude, harsh voice cry out, "Holloa! where are you all?"

"Ah!" I thought, "that is the sergeant," and I began to listen.

"Here is our sergeant," cried Sâfel, triumphantly.

"Ah! so much the better," answered my wife, in an amiable voice. "Come in, sir. We have been expecting you. I heard we were to have the honour of lodging a sergeant, and we were delighted, for up to this time we have had only common soldiers. Pray come in, sir."

That was how she spoke, as if she had been quite pleased, and I thought, "Oh, Sarah! Sarah! what a woman thou art! What management!—what sense! I see thy shrewdness. Thou art going to try to mollify this old brute. Ah, Moses! what a wife thou hast! Rejoice in her."

p. 60.

I made haste to finish dressing, laughing within myself; and I heard the sergeant say, "Ay, ay, that's all very fine. But let me see my room and my bed. Fine words won't do for me. Everybody knows what Sergeant Trubert is."

"You shall see directly, sir," answered my wife. "Here is your room, here is your bed; it is our best."

Then they came out into the passage, and I heard Sarah open the door of the room where Baruch and Zeffen slept when they came to Phalsburg. I came in quietly. The sergeant was thrusting his fist into the bed to see if it was soft. Sarah and Sâfel were standing behind him. He was looking into every corner with a scowl. You never saw such a countenance, Fritz. His moustache was grey; his nose thin and long, coming down in a point over his mouth; his skin was yellow, and his face wrinkled. He let the butt-end of his musket drag all along the floor, and went on grumbling, I do not know what, to himself.

"Hum! hum! What is that in that corner?"

"It is the washstand, sir."

"Are these chairs strong? Will they give way with me?" And then he banged them down on the ground with all his force. It was easy to see that he wanted something to find fault with. As he turned round, he saw me, and looking at me askance, "Are you the master of the house?" said he.

"Yes, sergeant."

"Ah!" He put his gun in a corner, threw his

knapsack on the table, and said, "That's all. Leave me."

Sâfel had just opened the kitchen-door, and the good smell of the roast came into the room.

"Monsieur le Sergeant," said Sarah, in a winning voice, "I beg your pardon, but I should like to ask you a favour."

"You!" said he, looking at her over his shoulder; "you want to ask me a favour?"

"Yes, sir, if you would do us the pleasure, as you are come to live with us, and will be, as one may say, one of the family, to accept of part of our dinner—at least, for once."

"Oh, ah!" said he, turning his nose in the direction of the kitchen, "that is another thing." He appeared to be considering whether he should do us this honour, and we waited to hear what he would say; when he once more sniffed the smell of the dinner, and, throwing his cartridge-box on the bed, he said, "Very well. So be it. Let us see what you have got."

I thought, "Vagabond, if I could make you dine on nothing but potatoes."

But Sarah appeared to be delighted, saying, "This way, sir; this way if you please."

When I came into the dining-room, I saw it was fit for a prince; the floor swept, a clean table-cloth spread, and our silver spoons and forks laid out.

Sarah placed the sergeant in my arm-chair, and made him sit at the head of the table. He took it all as

a matter of course. Our woman-servant brought in the large tureen; and, when the cover was taken off, the smell of the good soup á la crême filled the room, and we began dinner.

Fritz, I could tell you everything we had. You may believe me, neither you nor I have ever eaten better. We had a roast goose, a splendid pike, sour-croût—in a word, everything one could wish at a grand dinner; and Sarah had cooked it all in the greatest perfection. We had, besides, four bottles of Beaujolais wine, warmed with hot napkins, as is proper in winter, and dessert in abundance.

Well, would you believe that the fellow did not appear to approve of anything? Would you believe that never once, during this dinner, which lasted nearly two hours, he had the grace to say, "This fish is excellent," "This goose is beautifully cooked," or even "Your wine is capital," or anything else that is agreeable to an entertainer or that would reward a good cook for her pains? Well, no; not once. One would have said that he sat down to such a dinner every day. And besides, the more my wife flattered and coaxed him, the more he turned up his nose, the more he frowned, the more he looked at us just as if we had concerted to poison him.

From time to time I looked at Sarah, quite indignant; but she continued to smile, and helped the sergeant to the tit-bits, and constantly filled his glass. Two or three times I was going to say, "Ah, Sarah,

what a good cook you are! How nice this seasoning is!" But I caught the sergeant looking at me from under his eyebrows, as much as to say, "What have you got to say, I wonder? Do you think I don't know better than you what is good and what is bad?"

And I held my tongue. I wished him farther, and I grew more and more angry at every bit that he swallowed. But Sarah's example helped me to put a good face on it, and towards the end I thought, "Now, as the dinner is eaten, and as it will soon be all over, let us go on as we have begun. Sarah has made a mistake; but all the same; her idea would have been a good one if it had been anybody but such a vagabond as this."

I went then myself to tell them to bring in the coffee, and I took some kirschenwasser and some old rum out of the cupboard.

"What's that?" said the sergeant.

"Some rum, and some kirschenwasser from the Black Forest," replied I.

"Ah!" said he, winking, "it is easy to say it is old kirschenwasser from the Black Forest—everybody says that; but you cannot deceive Sergeant Trubert. Let us see what it is like."

While he was taking his coffee, he filled his glass with kirschenwasser twice; and both times he said, "Ha! I am not sure that it is genuine."

I could have thrown the bottle at his head.

As Sarah was going to fill his glass for the third

time, he got up, saying, "Enough, thank you! The posts are doubled. I am on guard to-night at the French Gate. The dinner was not bad; and if you give me one like it from time to time, we may get on."

He never smiled; indeed, he appeared to be making fun of us. "We will do our best, Monsieur le Sergeant," said Sarah, as he went into his room to put on his great-coat.

"We shall see," he said, as he went downstairs, "we shall see."

Up to that time I had not spoken, but when he was at the bottom I exclaimed, "Sarah, I never saw such a wretch in my life; we shall never be able to agree with him—he will drive us all out of the house!"

"Tut, tut, Moses," answered she, laughing; "I do not say so. I think just the contrary. We shall be good friends. You will see, you will see."

"Ah!" said I, "but I have small hopes."

She kept smiling as she removed the cloth, and inspired me with some little confidence, for I knew she was a woman of great shrewdness and judgment.

VII.

SERGEANT TRUBERT IN A NEW LIGHT.

You see, Fritz, what the citizens had to put up with in those times. Well, it was while I was paying for the discharge of extra military duty—when Monborne was ordering me about, when Sergeant Trubert was billeted on me, and when domiciliary visits were talked of, to ascertain if people had any store of provisions—that my twelve pipes were travelling slowly along the roads. Oh, how I repented having ordered them! How often was I ready to tear my hair off my head when I reflected that half of all I had saved in thirty years was in jeopardy! How I prayed for the Emperor! How I ran to the cafés every morning to read the papers, and how I trembled while I read them! Nobody knew what I suffered—not even Sarah; for I kept everything from her. She was too sharp not to perceive my anxiety, and sometimes she would say, "Keep up your courage, Moses, a little while longer; it will be all right."

But the rumours that reached us daily from Alsace,

from Lorraine, and from Hundsruck, completely upset me: "They are on the march! They do not dare! We are ready for them! We shall be surprised! They are going to make peace! They will be here to-morrow! There will be no winter campaign! It will not be long before they are here! The Emperor is still at Paris! Marshal Victor is at Huningue! They are enrolling the custom-house officers, the forest-keepers, the gendarmes! The Spanish dragoons were seen yesterday from Saverne! The mountaineers are to defend the Vosges! The battle will be fought in Alsace!" It was enough to drive one mad, Fritz. You heard one thing in the morning that made you glad, and another in the evening that made you miserable.

My brandy was coming nearer all the time. It came in the midst of this contradictory news, which might change any day into balls and bombs. If I had not had so many other troubles, I should have gone out of my mind. Happily my indignation against Monborne and the other scoundrels occupied my thoughts.

We did not hear any more of Sergeant Trubert all the day of the grand dinner, or the night after; he was on guard. But the next day, as I was dressing, he came up with his gun on his shoulder. He opened the door, laughing. His moustaches were all white with frost. I was only half dressed, and I looked at him with astonishment. My wife was still in the bed-room.

"Ha, ha, Father Moses," said he, in a good-tempered voice, "it has been cold enough to-night."

"Yes, sergeant," replied I; "it is December, we must expect it."

"We must expect it—yes; all the more reason to take a drop! Is there any of the old kirschenwasser left?"

He looked through me as he spoke. I left my arm-chair directly, and fetched the bottle, saying, "Ay, ay, sergeant, there is some left; help yourself!"

When I said that, a smile passed over his face; he put down his musket in a corner, and held out his glass to me, saying, "Help me yourself, Father Moses!" I poured him out a brimming glass, and while I was filling it he kept on smiling. There were scores of wrinkles in the corners of his eyes, in his cheeks, and all over his gallant face. He did not laugh aloud, but his eyes twinkled with good-humour. "This is famous kirsch! the real thing, Father Moses. I am a good judge; I have drunk it in the Black Forest without paying! Won't you touch glasses with me?"

"With pleasure," I answered. And so we drank together. He kept on looking at me. All of a sudden he said, looking at me up and down with a droll expression, "I frightened you yesterday, Father Moses, did I not?" and he winked.

"Oh, no, sergeant."

"Come, come," said he, laying his hand on my shoulder, "come, own that I frightened you." He laughed as if he was highly amused at the idea, and I could not help replying, "Well, yes, a little."

"Ha, ha! I knew it," he said; "you had been told, 'That sergeant is a terrible fellow!' You were afraid of me, and you gave me a dinner fit for a prince, to coax me."

He laughed aloud, and at last I laughed too, so we both laughed together. Sarah, who had heard all that passed from the neighbouring room, came forward, saying, "Good-morning, sir."

Then he exclaimed, "That is what I call a woman. You may boast of having a woman of spirit for your wife, Moses, one slyer than yourself. Ha, ha! that is as it should be."

Sarah was delighted. "Oh, sir," said she, "you don't think——"

"Tut, tut!" said he, "you are a clever woman; I saw that in a minute, and I said, 'Look out, Trubert! they are civil to thee; it is a trick to send thee to the inn. Let us see their game!' Ha, ha, ha! you are good folks; you gave me a dinner fit for a marshal, and, Father Moses, I invite myself to take a glass of kirsch with you now and then. Put the bottle by itself, it is good stuff! But now, the room that you have given me is too good. I do not like all those gimcracks: handsome furniture and soft beds are all very well for women, but all I want is a little room, like that next to the large one, with a couple of chairs, a deal table, a bedstead, with a mattress and a quilt, and five or six nails in the wall to hang up my things. Let me have that."

"If you wish it, Monsieur le Sergeant."

"I do wish it; the best room shall be kept for show."

"You will breakfast with us?" said my wife, pleased enough.

"I breakfast and dine at the canteen," answered the sergeant; "I manage very well there, and I should never put good folks like you to expense on my account; when people are considerate, and treat an old soldier as he ought to be treated, Trubert is what he ought to be."

"But, Monsieur le Sergeant——" replied Sarah.

"Call me sergeant," said he; "I know you now; you are not like those rascals in the town who have grown rich while we have been fighting; who owe all their gains to the army, who lived on us, and who are now ready to send us to sleep in the most wretched places! Ah!" His face was frightful to look at, his very moustaches trembled with anger, and I thought, "What a fortunate thing that we received him as we did! Sarah is always right!" But he soon became calm, and began to smile as he laid his hand on my shoulder, exclaiming, "Only to think that you are Jews! an abominable race, everything that is miserly, and dirty, and mean—to think that you are Jews! You are Jews, are you not?"

"Yes, sir," replied Sarah.

"Well, upon my honour, I am surprised," said he; "I had seen so many Jews in Poland and in

Germany, that when I heard I was to be quartered on Jews, I thought, 'Let them look out, I will pull the house down over their heads!'" Then, as we stood quite silent and humiliated—"Come, no more of that; you are good people, and I should be sorry to vex you. Moses, your hand." I gave him my hand. "I like you," said he. "Now, Madame Moses, let me have the small room."

We showed him into it, and he went back to fetch his knapsack out of the other immediately, saying, "Now I feel quite at home. We shall never fall out. I shall not disturb you—you will not trouble me. I shall come in and go out at all hours; you will know it is Sergeant Trubert, that is sufficient; and sometimes we will take our glass together in the morning. It is agreed, is it not, Moses?"

"Yes, sergeant."

"Here is the key of the house," said Sarah.

"That is right; all is settled; now I must take a nap. Good-by, my friends."

"Hope you will sleep well, sergeant."

We came out immediately, and we heard him lie down. "You see, Moses," said my wife in a whisper, when we got into the passage, "all has turned out well."

"Yes," replied I, "very well, Sarah: you managed cleverly; and now, if the spirits were only here, we should be quite happy."

VIII.

FATHER MOSES' FIRST ENCOUNTER.

From this time the sergeant lived with us, and never put us out of the way. Every morning, before going to his duty, he came into my room for a few minutes, and chatted while he took his glass of kirsch. He liked to joke with Sâfel, and we all called him "our sergeant," as if he had been one of the family. He always appeared pleased to see us. He was a most orderly man; he never let our Schabbès-Goïe black his shoes, always cleaned his shoulder-belts himself, and allowed no one to touch his arms.

One morning, as I was going to exercise, he met me in the passage, and saw a spot of rust on my gun; he began to swear, exclaiming, "Ah! Father Moses, if I had you in my company, I would make you pay for that." I thought, "Ay, but you have not got me, I am thankful to say." Sarah, who was leaning over the banisters, laughed outright.

From that day forth the sergeant regularly inspected

my accoutrements. I was obliged to clean the musket, and polish up the bayonet, just as if I intended to use them. And when he knew that Monborne treated me as if I had been a fool, he insisted on teaching me the exercise. All I could say was no use; he only frowned and said, "Father Moses, I cannot bear that a good fellow like you should not know as well as the rabble. Come along!" And then we went up into the loft. It was very cold; but the sergeant got so angry when I did not execute the movements vigorously, that the sweat was dropping off me by the time it was over. I used to hear Sarah, Sâfel, and our servant, laughing at the top of the stairs, as they peeped through the laths, but I dared not turn my head round. It did not matter to Trubert, who taught me the charge in double quick, and made me one of the best in our company.

Ah, Fritz, all would have been well if the brandy had come; but instead of my twelve pipes of spirits, there arrived half a company of marines, and four hundred recruits for the depôt. Immediately after, the Governor gave orders for everything to be levelled to the distance of six hundred mètres round the town. One must have seen the destruction in every direction —the hedges rooted up, the fences pulled down, the cottages demolished, their poor owners carrying away but a few planks or a beam; one must have beheld, from the top of the ramparts, the rows of poplars that were felled, the fruit-trees that were cut down, and dragged away by swarms of labourers—one must have

seen these things to know what war brings with it. Poor old Frise, the two young Camuses, the Sades, the Bosserts, and all the small gardeners who lived at Phalsburg, were the most to be pitied. I can fancy I still hear the lamentations of Frise: "Oh, my poor apple-trees! oh, my poor pear-trees, that I planted with my own hands forty years ago! What beautiful trees you were, and always loaded with fruit. Ah! what shall I do?" The soldiers hewed away all the same. At last Frise pulled his hat over his eyes, and went away, with the hot tears running fast down his cheeks.

There was also a report that we were going to set fire to the "Maisons Rouges," at the foot of the hill going to Mittelbronn, to the tile-works at Pernette, to the little inns of the "Arbre Vert" and the "Panier Fleuri;" but it seems the Governor decided that it was not necessary, either because these houses were beyond cannon range, or that there was no hurry, unless the allies arrived sooner than they were expected.

On December 22, about eleven in the morning, the drums beat to arms. We all thought it was for exercise, and I set out as usual, with my musket over my shoulder; but on arriving in view of the Mairie, I saw that all the troops of the garrison were drawn up under the trees in the Place. We were formed like them, two deep; and then the Governor Moulin, the Commandants Thomas and Petitgenet, and the Mayor, with his scarf on, made their appearance. The drums beat;

presently the drum-major raised his bâton. The drums ceased. The Governor spoke thus:—

"Officers, National Guards, Soldiers,—The enemy is concentrated on the Rhine, at only three days' march from us. The town is declared in a state of siege; the civil authority is superseded by the military; the court-martial is permanent, and replaces the ordinary tribunals.

"Inhabitants of Phalsburg,—We count on your courage, your devotion, and your obedience.

"Vive l'Empereur!"

And a thousand shouts of "Vive l'Empereur!" rent the air.

My very hair stood on end; my brandy was still on the road, and I looked on myself as a ruined man. The distribution of cartridges, and the orders given to the battalion to seize the food and cattle in the neighbouring villages to provision the town, prevented me from reflecting on my misfortunes. I thought, moreover, of my own danger, for every one felt sure, when he heard the order, that the peasants would defend their property, and it is dreadful to rob people and fight against them too. I grew pale as I thought of it. But when the Commandant Thomas cried, "Load!" and I bit my first cartridge, when I put it in the barrel, and instead of hearing the clink of the ramrod, I felt a ball at the bottom! when we heard the order to "Wheel to the left—Forward—Quick time—March," and when we started for Baraques du Bois-de-Chênes, while the first

battalion was passing the Quatre-Vents and Bichelberg, and the second Wecherm et Metting, all the time I was thinking, "We are to seize and carry off everything, and the court-martial is sitting at the Mairie to judge those who do not do their duty." All these new and terrible things overcame me completely. I looked at the village in the distance, and my eyes filled with tears when I thought of the cries of the women and children.

Oh, Fritz, it is a dreadful thing, just at the beginning of winter to take a poor peasant's cow, his goats, his pigs, in a word, all his substance; it is dreadful; and my own misfortune made me feel those of others more keenly. I was thinking, too, as we marched, of my daughter Zeffen, and Baruch, and their children, and I said in my heart, "O Lord, O Lord, if the enemy comes on them, what will they do in an unprotected town like Saverne? Everything will be taken; any day they may find themselves destitute."

While these thoughts stopped my breath, I noticed several of the peasants watching us from their little windows, and from the middle of the road. They little knew what we were going to do to them. Six mounted gendarmes preceded us; the Commandant Thomas gave orders to pass right and left of the Baraques to hinder the peasants from driving their cattle into the wood when they discovered we were come to plunder them. They started off at a gallop. We had just reached the first house, where the stone crucifix is,

when the order was given, "Halt!" Then thirty men were detached to place sentries in the lanes, and I was one. I was glad, for I preferred that to going into the barns and stables. As we marched down the road, the peasants asked what was the matter; whether the trees had been damaged;* whether we were going to take any one up, and similar questions. But we did not answer them, and marched past in quick time.

Monborne posted me in the third lane on the right, near the large house where Franz (the breeder of bees) lived, at the back of the village, on the slope of the valley. We could hear the sheep bleating and the oxen lowing; the rascal Monborne winked at me, saying, "They will be nice and fat. We shall astonish the Baraquins." He had no pity for the poor people, and he said to me, "Moses, thou wilt stay there. If any one tries to pass, stop them with the bayonet. If they resist, stab them, and fire afterwards. The law must prevail." I do not know where the cobbler had heard that, but he left me in the lane, between the hedges, which were white with frost, and went his way with the rest of the picket.

I had been about twenty minutes in this place, considering what I should do if any of the peasants tried to drive their cattle past, and saying to myself that it would be better to fire on the animals than on the people. I was very unhappy and very cold. Just then,

* This is always sharply looked to, and punished by the authorities.

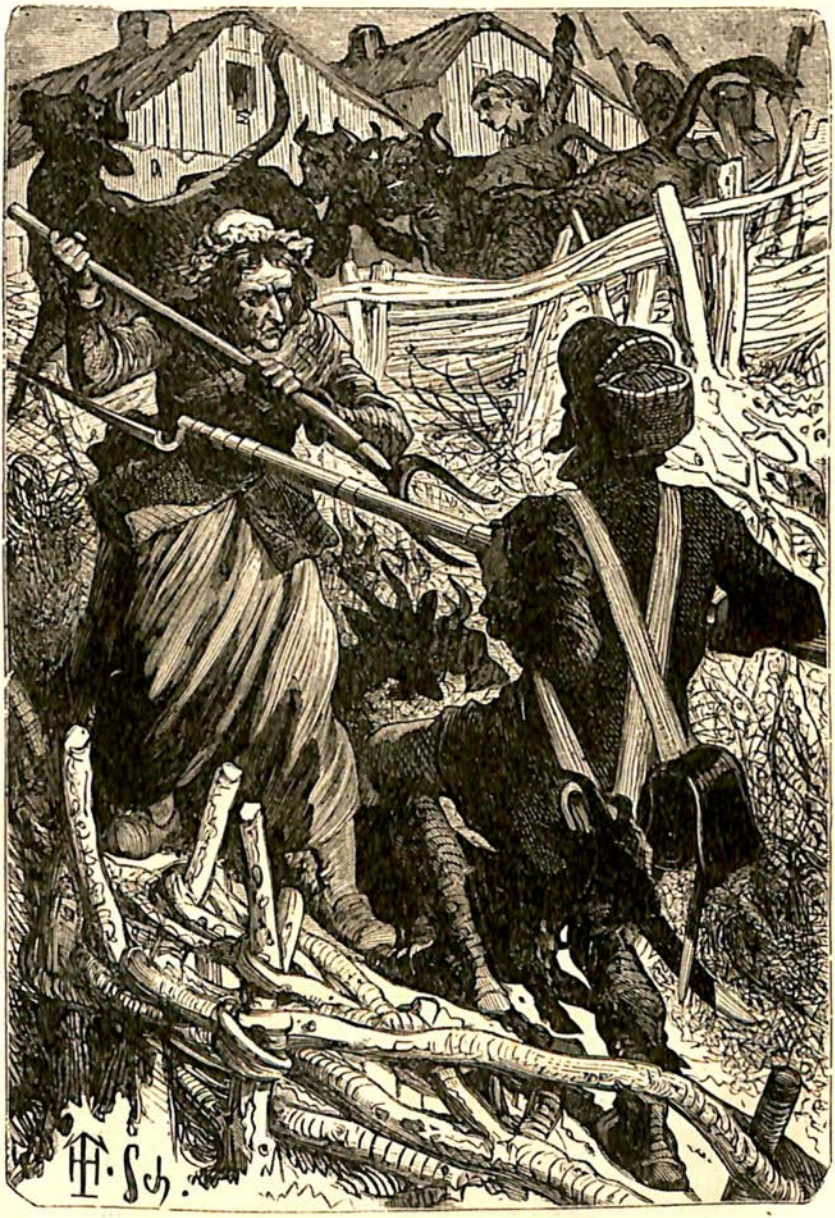
loud cries were heard, and, at almost the same moment, the drums began to beat. The men were entering the stables, and driving the cattle out. The Baraquins swore and wept; some offered opposition. The Commandant Thomas only cried, "To the Place! Drive them to the Place."

Some of the cows were making their way through the hedges; in a word, it was a dreadful scene of confusion, and I thought myself fortunate to be where I was; but my satisfaction did not last long, for, all of a sudden, a herd of goats, driven by two old women, came into the lane, in order to get down to the valley. Then I was obliged to stop them with the bayonet, and cry, "Halt!"

One of the women, Dame Migneron, knew me. "Let me pass, Moses," she cried, trying at the same time to bear me down with her pitchfork, while the other attempted to drive the goats into a little garden by the roadside, but the railings were too close together, and the hedge too high.

I would have let them pass, and have said I had not seen them, but, unfortunately, the Lieutenant Rollet came up, crying, "Look out there!" Two men of his company, that tall fellow, Mâcry, and Schweyer, the brewer, were behind him.

The old woman Migneron, being stopped by my bayonet, ground her teeth, as she said, "Ah! wretch of a Jew! thou shalt pay for it." She was so furious, that she did not care for my musket, and three times



p. 78.

following she endeavoured to stick me with the pitch-fork; but I found that drill is good for something, for I parried every stroke.

Two of the goats got away between my legs, all the others were taken. The old women were driven back, and my comrades returned to the high-road, which was full of cattle bellowing and kicking in all directions. Migneron sat down under the hedge, tearing her hair. Two cows came by with their tails in the air, jumping over everything, and upset all the beehives: fortunately it was winter, and the bees were half dead, or else I fancy they would have put our battalion to the rout. Nickel the cowherd's horn sounded through the village. He had been pressed in the name of the law, so he went through the street, and the beasts became quiet at the sight of him, so that they could be ranged in order. I saw them all go past from the lane; the oxen and cows went first, then the goats, and the pigs last of all. The Baraquins followed, throwing stones. I began to think I should be forgotten, and that the exasperated people would fall upon me, and I should be massacred; but the Sergeant Monborne came, with his men, and released me. They were all laughing, and saying, "We have stripped them clean, all at one haul; there is not as much as a goat left."

We quickened our step, to regain the column, which marched in two lines, on the right and on the left of the road; the flocks and herds in the middle, our company behind, and Nickel with the Commandant

Thomas at the head of the procession, which extended to the length of three hundred paces at least. Care had been taken to fasten bundles of hay to the horns of all the cattle, to serve them for food. In this order we passed slowly through the road to the cemetery. At the glacis we halted, the cattle were driven closer together, and orders came to turn them into the ditches behind the arsenal. We were the first party back; we had brought with us thirteen oxen, forty-five cows, a great many goats and pigs, and a few sheep. All the day the companies were coming in with their booty, so that the ditches were full of cattle, that were to live there in the open air.* Then the Governor said that the garrison had provisions for six months, and that all the inhabitants must prove that they had wherewith to subsist for the same length of time; and that the domiciliary visits would begin forthwith.

We had broken the ranks in front of the Hôtel de Ville, and I was going up the High Street, with my musket on my shoulder, when some one called out, "Ho! Father Moses!" I turned round, and saw it was our sergeant. "Well," said he, laughing, "you have been trying your hand; you have brought us in provisions. Well done!"

"Ah, yes, sergeant; but it is sad work!"

"Sad work, indeed! Thirteen oxen, forty-five cows, besides pigs and goats—why, it is splendid!"

* Oxen and cows are kept under cover, except during a few hours in the day.

"Ah, I dare say; but if you had heard the lamentations of these poor people; if you had seen ——"

"Tut, tut!" said he. "The first thing needful, Moses, is for the soldiers to be fed; men must have their rations, if they are to fight. I have seen plenty of this sort of thing in Germany, in Spain, and in Italy. The peasant is selfish everywhere; he wants to keep what he has for himself, and never thinks of the honour of his country. They are downright riff-raff! They must not be listened to; we must take a high hand with them."

"And so we did, sergeant," I answered; "but if I were master, these poor creatures should not be robbed; they had enough to suffer without that."

"You are too kind, Moses," said he, "and you think other people are like you; but you must always remember that the peasantry, the townsfolk, in fact, all civilians, live but by the military, and they would like to have all the advantage, and pay nothing. If we were to listen to you, we should die of hunger in this hole; the peasants would feed the Russians, the Austrians, and the Bavarians, at our expense; those vagabonds would be feasting from morning to night, and we should be as lean as church mice. That would never do; it is ridiculous!" He laughed aloud.

We had reached our house, and I was going upstairs, when Sarah called out in the dark, "Is it you, Moses?" for night was beginning to fall.

"Yes; it is the sergeant and I," I replied.

"Ah, good," said she; "I was looking out for you."

The sergeant called out, "Madame Moses, your husband may call himself a soldier now; he has not yet fired his musket, but he has charged with the bayonet."

"Ah!" said Sarah, "I am glad he is come back."

The light of the lamp shone brightly through the little white curtains of the glass door, and we perceived by the smell that the supper was on the table. The sergeant went into his room, as usual, and we went into ours. Sarah looked at me with her large black eyes; she saw how pale I was, and she knew very well what I was thinking of. She took off my cartridge-box, and placed my gun in the closet. "Where is Sâfel?" I asked.

"He is most likely on the Place; I had sent him to see if you were come back. But listen, he is on the stairs."

Then I heard the child coming up, and he opened the door, and came to kiss me, full of joy. We sat down to table, and in spite of my heaviness, I ate heartily, for I had not taken anything since the morning. All of a sudden, Sarah said, "If the invoice does not come before the gates of the town are shut, we shall have nothing to pay, for everything is at the risk of the seller till the way-bill is signed."

"Yes," replied I; "and it would be no more than

right, for instead of forwarding the spirits at once, M. Quataya was a week before he answered my letter. If he had despatched the pipes the same day, or even the next, they would have been here by this time. The consequences of the delay ought not to fall on us."

You see, Fritz, in what a state of anxiety we were; but as the sergeant came to smoke his pipe by the stove, as was his custom, we said no more on the subject. But I spoke of my fears as to what might become of Zeffen and Baruch, and their children, in an open town like Saverne. The sergeant tried to tranquillize me, saying that though perquisitions of wine, brandy, meat, horses, and carts, were generally levied on such places, nothing was done to the inhabitants unless they offered active resistance; that, on the contrary, the troops lived on friendly terms with them. We stayed talking till near ten o'clock. The sergeant was to be on guard at the German Gate, and as soon as he went out, we went to bed. It was the night of the 22nd of December, a very cold night.

IX.

APPROACH OF THE ENEMY.

When I opened the shutters of our room next morning, everything was white with snow; the old elms on the Place, the street, the roofs of the Mairie, the market, and the church. Some of the neighbours—Recco, the tinman, Spick, the baker—opened their doors, and looked out, saying, "Ah! winter is come." Though we see this change every year, it always appears a new life. We breathe more freely out of doors; and when we come home, we are glad to sit down by the hearth, and smoke our pipes, while the fire crackles and blazes. I have felt it these seventy-five years, and I feel it still. I had scarcely opened the shutters, when Sûfel leapt out of his bed like a squirrel, and with his hair all frizzled, and his feet bare, he squeezed his face against the windows, crying out, "Oh, the snow, the snow! There will be plenty of sliding now." Sarah slipped on her things, and came to look out too. We all went to look for a few minutes, and then I went to light the

fire, Sarah passed into the kitchen, Sâfel made haste to dress himself, and all went on as usual. Though the snow was falling, it was very cold; you could see by the way the fire took, and by its roaring in the stove, that it was freezing hard. While we were eating our soup, I said to Sarah, "The poor sergeant must have had a terrible night of it. He will be glad of his glass of kirsch."

"Yes, indeed," she said; "it is a good thing you thought of it." She opened the cupboard, and filled my small travelling flask with kirsch."

You know, Fritz, that our people do not like to go into inns when they are on the road in their business: every one carries his little flask, and his crust; it is better, and more conformable to the law of the Almighty. As soon as Sarah had filled my bottle, I put on my great-coat, and having placed it in my pocket, I set off for the guard-house. Sâfel wanted to come with me, but his mother told him to stay, so I went alone, well pleased to do our sergeant a service. It was about seven o'clock, and there was snow and wind enough to blind one; but by keeping under the houses, with my nose buried in my coat-collar, I got through it to the German Gate. I had my foot on the steps of the guard-house, when the sergeant himself opened the heavy door under the porch, and exclaimed, "What! you, Father Moses! what brings you here such a morning as this?"

The guard-house was full of fog; you could only

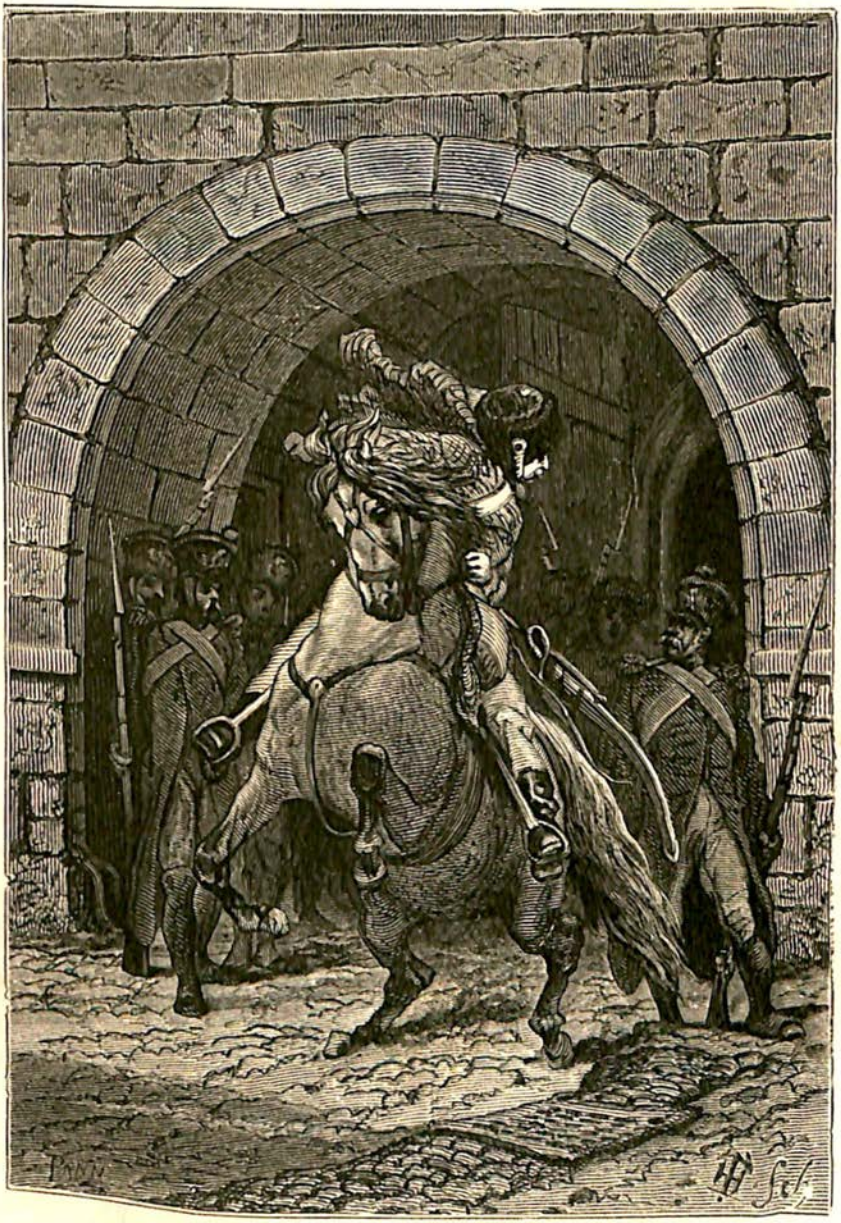
just see some men at the end, stretched on the camp-beds, and half-a-dozen veterans round the stove, which was red-hot. I only just looked in. "Sergeant," said I, giving him my little flask, "I have brought you your drop of kirsch; it has been dreadfully cold to-night; you must want it."

"You thought of me, then, Father Moses?" exclaimed he, taking hold of my arm, and looking at me kindly.

"Yes, sergeant."

"Well, I am glad of that." Then his elbow went up, and he took a good pull. At the same moment the cry of "Qui vive!" was heard at a distance, and the advanced guard hastened to raise the barrier. "It is good," said the sergeant, tapping the cork, as he gave me back the bottle; "take it, Moses, and many thanks." Then turning his head in the direction of the half-moon, "There is something new; what is it?"

We were both looking, when a quarter-master of hussars, a grizzly old fellow, with many a chevron on his sleeve, rode in, full speed. As long as I live, I shall have that man before my eyes: his reeking horse, his flying sabretache, his sword clanking against his boot, his fur cap, and his hussar jacket covered with sleet; his long, bony, wrinkled face, his sharp nose, his pointed chin, his yellow eyeballs. I see him still, as he dashed in like the wind; then, drawing rein till his horse reared, he cried, with a voice like a trumpet, "The Governor's quarter-sergeant!"



p. 86.

"The first house to the right, quarter-master. What news?"

"The enemy is in Alsace!"

Those who have never seen such men, men of iron, inured to war, can form no idea of what they are like. And then that cry—"The enemy is in Alsace!" It made you shudder. The veterans had come out, and when the hussar had tied his horse up at the Governor's gate, the sergeant said, "Well, Father Moses, we shall come to close quarters with them now!" He laughed, and all the rest seemed well pleased.

I went away as quickly as I could, with my head hanging down, and repeating, in my terror, the words of the prophet: "Many messengers shall come unto the king, and shall say unto him, Thy barriers are cast down, and the fire devoureth the land. Thy valiant men have forborne to fight, and have shut themselves up in the strong places. Blow the trumpet among the nations, raise up the peoples against him, and the kingdoms and the captains. The earth shall be shaken, and shall be in travail, for all that the Lord hath resolved shall be executed; and the land shall be brought to desolation, and none shall dwell therein." I saw that every hope was lost, and that I should be ruined.

"Oh, Moses, what is the matter with you?" exclaimed my wife, when I got home; "you look distracted; it must be something dreadful."

"Yes, Sarah," I said, as I seated myself, "the day

of desolation which the prophet hath spoken is come. ' The king of the south shall bruise him with his horn, and the king of the north shall come up against him as a flood, and shall cover the land and overwhelm it.' " I raised my hands to heaven as I spoke ; Ṣâfel ran between my knees, and Sarah looked at me, speechless. Then I told them that the Austrians were in Alsace, that hundreds of thousands of Bavarians, and Swedes, and Russians, and Prussians were following, that a hussar had just brought the news, that our spirits were lost, and that ruin was hanging over our heads. And then I shed tears, and neither Sarah nor Sâfel could console me.

It was the eighth hour of the day. The town was all in an uproar ; the drums were beating, orders of the day were read—one might have thought the enemy was already there. But one thing which I particularly remember—for we had opened our windows to hear—was that the Governor ordered the inhabitants to remove all the hay and straw from their barns and lofts, and that, while we were listening, one of the large waggons with two horses, which were in use in Alsace, turned into the street, and there was Baruch sitting in front, and Zeffen, with one child in her arms and the other by her side, sitting on a bundle of straw behind. They were come to take refuge with us. I was overcome at this sight, and raising my hands to heaven, I exclaimed, " Now help me, O Lord ! Thou seest that these little children have need of me. Be Thou my strength : let

me not be cast down." And I went down to meet them directly, Sarah and Sâfel following. I lifted my daughter out of the waggon myself, whilst Sarah took the children.

Baruch said, "We have come at the very last minute. They shut the barriers as we entered. Many from Quatre-Vents will never get in."

I answered, "The Lord be praised, Baruch! And be ye all welcome. I have not much, but all I have is yours. Come in!" So we went upstairs, Zeffen, and Sarah, and I, carrying the children; Baruch stayed below to take what they had brought with them out of the cart, and then he came up too.

By this time the streets were full of the hay and straw that was thrown from the lofts. The wind had gone down, the snow had ceased to fall, and soon after there was silence in all the town.

Sarah hastened to produce the remains of our supper and a bottle of wine; and while Baruch was eating, he told us that all Alsace was in terror, that the Austrians had outflanked Bâle, and were advancing, by forced marches, on Schlestadt, Neuf-Brisach, and Strasburg, after having surrounded Huningue. "Everybody is flying," he said; "they are making for the mountains with what they can save in their carts, and are driving their flocks into the woods. It is reported that bands of Cossacks have been seen at Mutzig; but that is hardly possible, for Marshal Victor is in Upper Rhine with his army, and dragoons are marching across the

country to join him; how could the enemy traverse his lines without coming to an engagement?"

That is what he said; and we were listening with the greatest attention, when the sergeant came in. He was just off duty, and stood in the doorway, looking at us with astonishment. Then I took Zeffen by the hand, and I said, "Sergeant, this is my daughter; these are my son-in-law and my grandchildren, of whom I have spoken to you sometimes. They know you very well, for I have often told them in my letters how fond we were of you."

The sergeant looked at Zeffen, and replied, "Father Moses, your daughter is a fine woman, and your son-in-law looks like a good fellow." Then he took the baby, Esdras, out of Zeffen's arms, and held him up, making such an odd face that the child laughed, and so everybody was pleased. The other child looked on with his eyes wide open.

"My children have come to stay with me," said I to the sergeant. "I hope, if they make a little noise in the house, you will excuse it."

"Excuse it, Father Moses! I will excuse whatever they do. Never trouble about that. Are we not old friends?" And then, in spite of all we could say, he insisted on occupying a room at the back. "All the family must be together," said he. "The old sergeant will trouble nobody, so that he is looked on as a friend."

I was so deeply touched, that I got up and took his

two hands in mine. "The day that you came into my house was a blessed day," said I, with the tears in my eyes; "the Lord be praised for it!"

He exclaimed, laughing, "Nonsense, Father Moses, nonsense! I have done nothing but what is quite natural; why should you be surprised at it?" He went out immediately, and carried his things to his new room; then he went downstairs, for fear he should be in the way. What mistakes people make sometimes! This sergeant, whom Frichard had sent to be a trouble and annoyance to us, was like one of ourselves at the end of a fortnight; he would have done anything in the world for us; and though so many years have gone by, I cannot think of him now without emotion. As soon as we were alone, Baruch told us that he could not remain at Phalsburg, that he had brought us his family, and such provisions as he could lay his hand on; but that, in the midst of such dangers, when the enemy would soon be at Saverne, his duty was to keep the house, and, as far as in him lay, to prevent the pillage of his goods. It seemed very reasonable to us, but it made us very sad; we could not help thinking how miserable it would be to live divided, and to be always in uncertainty and anxiety as to the fate of those we loved. Every one was busy all the same; Sarah and Zeffen prepared the children's beds, Baruch carried up the provisions he had brought, Sâfel played with the two little ones, and I walked backwards and forwards, thinking of all our miseries.

By the time Zeffen and the children were settled in the best room, the German Gate was shut, and at two o'clock at the latest the French Gate would be closed too. Baruch then said, "Zeffen, the time is come!" He had hardly pronounced these words, when the lamentations began—the cries, the kisses, the tears. Ah, it is a great happiness to be loved—it is the only true happiness in this life—but, oh, the grief of parting! And how we all loved each other! how Zeffen and Baruch embraced! how they handed the children from one to the other! how they gazed at them, and then how they began to sob and weep again! What could I find to say at such a moment? I sat down by the window, with my face in my hands; I had not the strength to utter a word. I thought, "My God! must it be that one man alone shall hold in his hands the fate of all—that by his will alone, and for the gratification of his pride, all the rest of humanity shall be confounded and divided each from each. Shall these miseries last for ever? Wilt Thou never take pity on Thy poor creatures?" I did not raise my eyes, for I was listening to the sad voice of my own heart. At last, when Baruch saw that Zeffen was utterly cast down and powerless, he rushed out of the room, saying, "It must be so; I must go. Adieu, Zeffen; adieu, my children; adieu, all."

Nobody followed him. We heard the wheels that took him away, and then there was sadness like unto that of which it is said, "By the waters of Babylon we

sat down and wept, when we remembered thee, O Sion! As for our harps, we hanged them up upon the trees that are therein. They that had led us captive required of us then a song, and melody in our heaviness. Sing us one of the songs of Sion. How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?"

X.

AN ENGAGEMENT WITH THE COSSACKS.

But, Fritz, I was to have a still greater shock that day. You remember that I told you that Sarah had said, the night before, while we were at supper, that if we did not receive the invoice from the carrier, our spirits would still remain the property of M. Quataya, of Pézenas, and that we need not trouble ourselves about them? I thought so too, for it appeared to me just and right; and as the German Gate and the French Gate were both closed by three o'clock, so that nothing could come through them into the town, I thought it was all over, and that I had no cause for uneasiness. "It is a pity, Moses," said I to myself, as I paced the room backward and forward; "for, if these spirits had been sent off a week sooner, you would have made a famous profit; but at least now you have no anxiety on that score. Be satisfied with your old trade. Never undertake similar speculations; they destroy your peace."

These were my thoughts, when, at almost four o'clock, I heard some one coming upstairs. It was

a heavy step, as of one who was feeling his way up in the dark. Zeffen and Sarah were in the kitchen, preparing the supper—women have always something to say to each other in private; so I listened, and then I opened the door, saying, "Who is there?"

"Does Monsieur Moses, the spirit-merchant, live here?" asked a man in a smock-frock and slouched hat, with his whip over his shoulder—a waggoner, in fact.

When I heard these words I turned pale, and I answered, "Yes, my name is Moses; what is it?"

Then he came into the room, and pulled out from under his frock a thick leather pocket-book. I trembled as I saw it. "Here," said he, giving me two papers, "here is the invoice and the way-bill—take them; it is for twelve pipes of 'trois-six,'* from Pézenas."

"Well, where are they?"

"On the road from Mittelbronn, twenty minutes off," answered he composedly. "The Cossacks have stopped the carts, and I was obliged to take out the horses. I made all haste to get into the town by a postern gate under the bridge." As he spoke, my legs gave way under me, and I dropped into a seat, without being able to utter a word. "Pay me the carriage, and sign the receipt," said the man. Then I cried out in agony, "Sarah, Sarah!" And my wife and Zeffen came running in. The waggoner explained everything to them; as for me, I was bewildered, and could only

* The familiar denomination of alcohol among spirit-producers.

say, "All is lost now! Now I must pay without having the goods!"

My wife said, "We are quite ready to pay, sir, but the way-bill is made out for the delivery of the twelve pipes here."

The man replied, "I went to the magistrate before I came here to know what I could claim; he says that you are liable for all charges, even for the horses and carts. Do you hear? I took out the horses and got away with them; that's so much the less for you to make good. Are you going to pay? Yes or no."

We were standing there half-dead with fear when the sergeant came in. He had heard us disputing, and asked, "What is it, Father Moses? What is the matter with you? What does this man want?" Sarah, who never got confused, related the whole business quickly and clearly. He understood at once, and cried out, "Twelve pipes of 'trois-six,' that is to say, twenty-four pipes of cognac! What luck for the garrison! what luck!"

"Yes," replied I, "but they cannot come in; the gates of the town are shut; and the Cossacks have got possession of the carts."

"Not come in!" cried the sergeant; "nonsense! Do you think the Governor is such a fool as to lose twenty-four pipes of good brandy, when he knows the garrison wants it? Do you think he is going to let the Cossacks have such a prize as that? Pay the carriage, Madame Sarah; and you, Father Moses, put on your

great-coat, and come with me to the Governor. Put the letter in your pocket, and let us be off; there is not a minute to lose. If the Cossacks have time to broach the casks, you will find yourself deficient, I promise you."

When I heard what he said, I exclaimed, "Sergeant, you save my life!" And I made all haste to put on my coat.

Sarah said, "Must I pay the carriage?"

"Yes," I said, as I went downstairs; for it was certain that the waggoner could force us to pay.

When we got into the street I was in great distress of mind. I can only recollect that the sergeant walked on before me in the snow, and that he spoke a few words to the sapper at the Governor's quarters, and that we went up the grand marble staircase. When we got to the gallery at the top, the sergeant said to me, "Be composed, Father Moses. Take out your letter, and let me speak." At the same time he knocked softly at a door. Somebody said, "Come in." We went in. Colonel Moulin, a fat man, was in his dressing-gown, smoking his pipe, in front of a good fire. He was red in the face, and on the marble chimney-piece, between the timepiece and the vases of flowers, were a small decanter of rum and a drinking-glass. "What do you want?" said he, turning round.

"Colonel, this is what has happened," answered the sergeant; "twelve pipes of spirits have been stopped on the hill to Mittelbronn by the Cossacks.".

"The Cossacks!" exclaimed the Governor; "have they passed our lines?"

"Yes," said the sergeant; "it is a sudden attack. They have got possession of the twelve pipes of 'trois-six' that this patriot had ordered from Pézenas for the sustenance of the garrison."

"The thieves! the robbers!" cried the Governor.

"Here is the letter," replied the sergeant, taking it out of my hand.

The Colonel ran his eyes over it, and said in a short time, "Sergeant, take twenty-five men of your company, double up to Mittelbronn, deliver the waggons, and press the horses of the village to bring them into the town." And as we were going away, "Stay," said he, going to his bureau, and writing two words, "here is the order."

As soon as we were on the staircase, the sergeant said, "Run to the cooper, Father Moses, we may want him and his young men. I know the Cossacks; their first thought will be to unload the carts, to make sure of keeping possession of the casks. Tell them to bring ropes and ladders. I am off to the barracks to choose my men."

Then I ran home like a deer. I was enraged against the Cossacks. I seized my gun and my cartouche-box. I felt as if I could have faced an army. Sarah and Zeffen asked, "What is the matter? Where are you going?"

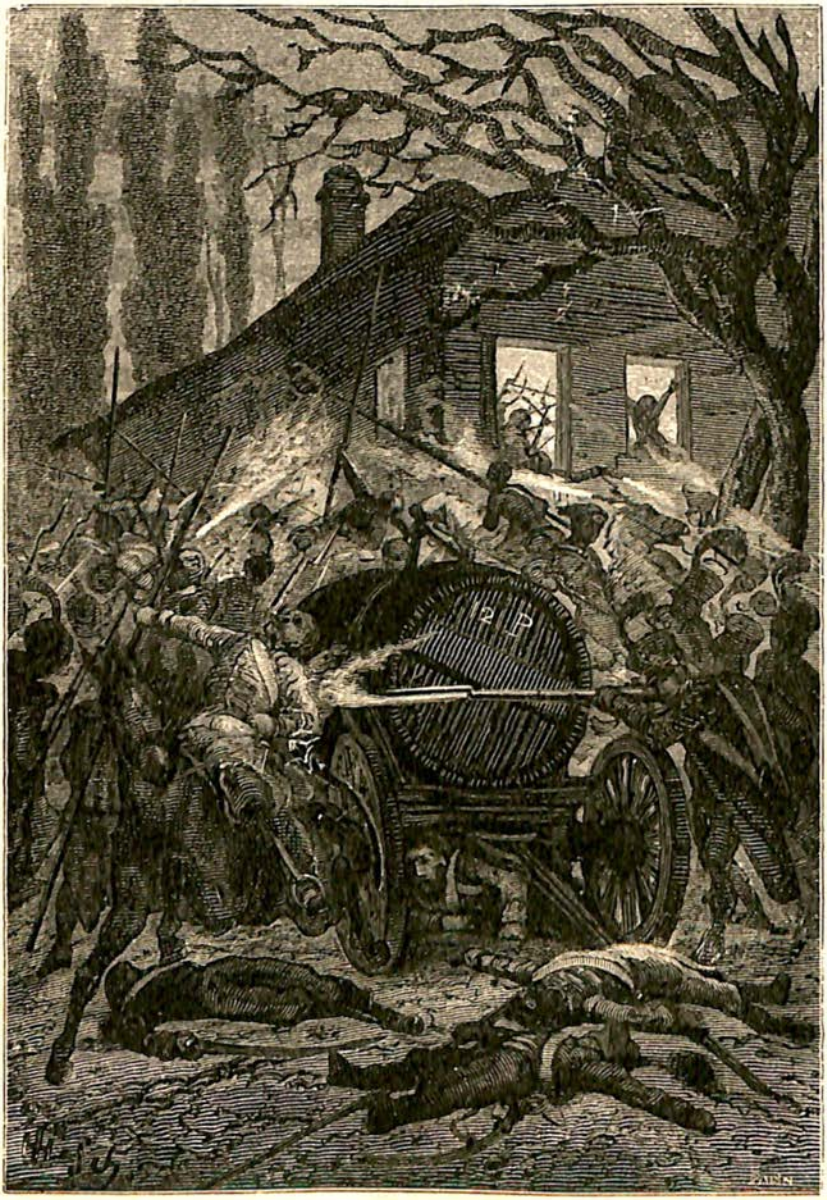
I replied, "You will know presently." Then I

went to Schweyer's. He had two horse-pistols, and he stuck them into his belt with his axe. His two sons, Nickel and Franz, got the ladders and some ropes, and we ran as fast as we could to the French Gate. The sergeant was not there; but two minutes after he came running down the Rue du Rempart, followed by about thirty veterans, one after the other, with their muskets on their shoulders. The officer on guard at the postern glanced at the order and let us pass; and in a few minutes after, we were in the trench behind the hospital, where the sergeant drew up his men and said, "It is cognac—twenty-four pipes of cognac! So look out, comrades. The garrison is without brandy. Those that do not like brandy can fall back." But they all wanted to be in the first rank; they laughed at the thought of what was coming. We came up the steps and through the covered way. It must have been about five o'clock. From the glacis you could see the great meadow of Eichmatt and the highest hills of Mittelbronn covered with snow. It was cloudy, and night was coming on. It was very cold. "Forward!" said the sergeant. We reached the road. The veterans ran at a trot in two files, on the right and on the left. The snow was up to their knees. Schweyer, his two sons, and I, marched behind. In about a quarter-of-an-hour, the veterans, who kept on running, were far ahead. We could still hear their cartridge-boxes rattling, but that noise was soon lost in the distance; and then we heard the dog that was kept chained at the

"Trois Maisons" barking. The silence of the night set me thinking. If it had not been for my brandy, I should have gone back to Phalsburg. Fortunately, the thought of it was uppermost, and I said, "Let us make haste, Schweyer, let us make haste!"

"Let us make haste, indeed!" cried he, in an angry tone; "it is very well for thee to make haste, to get hold of thy spirits; but what is it to us? Are we ruffians, that we should go and risk our lives?" I perceived from these words that they were going to turn back, and I was disgusted with them. "Take care what you do, Schweyer," I said; "if you and your sons run away, they will say you have deserted. The brandy is for the town. It is worse than deserting the colours, especially for coopers." "May evil take thee," said he; "we had no business to come." He walked up the hill with me, however. Nickel and Franz followed us leisurely.

When we reached the level ground at the top, we saw lights in the village. Everything appeared quiet there, but the two first houses were crowded with people. The door of the little inn "La Grappe" was wide open; and, by the light of the kitchen fire, we could see my two waggons standing in the road in front of the house. The occasion of this crowd was that the Cossacks were feasting at Heitz's. They had tied up their horses under the shed, and had forced the old woman Heitz to make them some soup. We were only about two or three hundred paces distant, and we could



p. 101.

see them plainly enough going up and down the steps outside the miller's house, and passing pots and pitchers from one to the other. I was convinced they were full of my brandy, for a lantern was hanging behind the first waggon, and these vagabonds all came from that direction in the act of drinking. My fury was such, that, without thinking of danger, I began running as fast as I could to stop the pillage. Happily the veterans were beforehand, or else I should have been massacred by the Cossacks. I had not got half-way, when our troop came through the hedge that bordered the road, and rushed forward like wolves, crying, "To the bayonet!"

You never saw such a scene of confusion, Fritz. In a second the Cossacks were in their saddles, and the veterans in the midst of them. The front of the little inn with its lattice-work, its dovecote, and the little garden with its palisades, were lighted up by the flashes of the musket and pistol-shots. Heitz's two daughters were at the windows, throwing their arms about, and screaming so that they could be heard all over Mittelbronn.

At every moment something stumbled and fell on the road, and the horses were seen flying across the fields, like stags, their necks stretched out, their manes and tails tossing about. The villagers came running, Father Heitz climbed up his ladder, and got into his hayloft, and I came up out of breath, and like one mad. I was not more than fifty paces off, when a Cossack, who

77329

was flying as fast as his horse could carry him, turned on me, furious, raising his lance to strike, and shouting, "Hourra!" (the war-cry of these men). I had only just time to stoop, and I felt the whizzing of his lance in the air, yea, I felt a shiver through all my veins, and my very hair stood on end. It was the most dreadful moment of all my life, Fritz. But what proves the wisdom and discretion that the Lord puts into His creatures, when He destines them to a good old age, is, that though my knees trembled under me, I crept under the first waggon, where the lance could not reach me; and thence I beheld the destruction of the wretches, for not one escaped. Five or six lay in a heap before the door, and three others lay sprawling on the road. It was all done in ten minutes, then all was dark, and I heard the sergeant say, "Cease firing!"

Heitz came out of the loft and lighted a lantern, and the sergeant, seeing me under the waggon, cried out, "Are you wounded, Father Moses?"

"No," said I, "but a Cossack tried to pierce me with his lance, and I got out of his way."

Then he laughed aloud, and gave me his hand to help me out, saying, "You gave me a fright, Father Moses; wipe the dirt off your back, or they may say you lack courage."

I laughed, as I thought, "Let them say what they please. The main chance is to live in good health, and as long as you can."

We had only one man wounded, Corporal Dahem;

he bandaged his wound himself, and wanted to walk. The calf of his leg had been pierced by a lance. He was placed on the first waggon, and Lehnel, Heitz's eldest daughter, filled him a glass of kirschenwasser, which restored his strength and even his good-humour. "This makes fifteen! it will keep me a week in hospital; leave me the bottle." As for me, I was delighted to see that my twelve pipes were still in the waggons, for Schweyer and his two sons had run away, and we should have had hard work to load without their assistance. I went directly and tapped on the last cask, to ascertain if any was gone. These rascally Cossacks had already drunk nearly half a measure of spirit, and Father Heitz told me that some of them put scarcely a drop of water to it. Such creatures must have metal throats, for the greatest drunkards among us would drop down if they were to swallow a single glass of "trois-six."

Well, it was over; we had only to think of getting back. It seems to me I see it all now. The dapple grey horses came out of Heitz's stable, one after the other. The sergeant, standing at the door holding up a lantern, was crying out, "Be as quick as you can; some of the vagabonds may come back." The veterans were standing round the waggons in front of the inn, and farther on the peasants, who had come with pitch-forks and pickaxes in their hands, were staring at the Cossacks stretched on the snow. I stood on the top of the steps singing and shouting in my heart, and thinking

of the delight of Sarah and Zeffen, and my Sâfel, when they should see my return with our property. When the horses were all in, and their bells began to tinkle, when I heard the whip crack, and the order given to move on, I was quite happy. Ah, Fritz, how fair everything seems when you look back on it after thirty years: the fears and anxieties are forgotten, but the remembrance of kindness received and of happy moments remains for ever. The veterans, walking on either side of the waggons, with their muskets under their arms, escorted my twelve pipes; Heitz drove the horses, the sergeant and I walked last.

"Well, Father Moses," said he to me laughing, "it is all right now; I suppose you are happy?"

"Happier than it is possible to tell you, sergeant; what I was afraid would be my ruin, will be a source of great prosperity to me and my family, and we owe it all to you."

"Pooh, pooh," said he, "you are joking."

He laughed, but I was quite affected; to have been so near losing everything, and then to see that all was recovered, and that we should make money—these thoughts overcame me; and I exclaimed in myself, "I will praise the Lord among the nations, for His goodness is great, and His wisdom reacheth unto the heavens."

XI.

FATHER MOSES RETURNS IN TRIUMPH.

Now I must relate to you our entrance into Phalsburg. You can fancy that my wife and children on seeing me take my gun were in great anxiety. About five o'clock Sarah and Zeffen went out to try if they could hear anything, and it was only then they learned that I was gone to Mittelbronn with a detachment of veterans. Imagine their terror.

The report of these extraordinary events was already spread through the town, and a number of persons took their places on the bastion of the infantry barracks to see what was passing at a distance. Burguet, the Mayor, and other notables, and a crowd of women and children were there, straining their eyes to try to see through the dark night. Several maintained that Moses had marched with the detachment, but nobody would believe them; and Burguet exclaimed, "It is impossible! A man of sense like Moses go to risk his life against the Cossacks! It cannot be." I should have thought the same in his

place. But what is to be said, Fritz? The most prudent men in the world become blind when their property is attacked; I say blind, for they no longer see danger.

This crowd was waiting, and Sarah and Zeffen soon joined them with their shawls over their heads, pale as death. They ascended the ramparts, and remained standing there in the snow without speaking—they were too terrified. I knew all this afterwards. It might have been between five and half-past when Zeffen and her mother took their station on the bastion; not a star was to be seen. It was just when Schweyer and his sons ran away; and five minutes after, the battle began.

Burguet told me afterwards, that, notwithstanding the darkness and the distance, the glare of the fusillade was seen as if it had been only a hundred paces off; nobody uttered a word, all listened breathlessly to the shots as they followed each other, and echoed through the Bois-de-Chênes and Lutzelburg. It was only when it was all over that Sarah descended the slopes leaning on Zeffen's arm; she could scarcely stand. Burguet saw them down to the street, and made them go into the corner house, where the owner, old Frise, was sitting, miserable enough, warming himself by the fire. Sarah said, "My last day is come!" Zeffen wept bitterly. I have often reproached myself for causing them so much grief, but who can answer for his prudence at all times? Has not the wise man himself

said, "I have considered the way of the wise, and the way of the fool; I have seen that wisdom is better than folly; but I have seen that it cometh to the wise man as to the fool; wherefore I said in my heart, Wisdom also is vanity?"

Burguet was running out of Frise's house just as Schweyer and his sons were ascending the steps from the postern, crying out that we were surrounded by the Cossacks, and it was all over with us. Fortunately my wife and daughter could not hear what they said, and the Mayor came up directly, and told them to hold their tongues, and go quietly home, if they did not want to be sent to the round-house. They obeyed, but that did not prevent people from believing them, particularly when they saw that everything was dark once more in the direction of Mittelbronn.

The crowd which came down from the ramparts filled the streets; many of them went to their homes never expecting to see us again, when, on the stroke of seven, the sentinel of the advanced post cried out, "Who goes there?" We had arrived at the barriers. The people hastened to the ramparts once more, the guard shouldered arms, and came to reconnoitre us. We, outside in the pitch dark night, could hear the noise in the town, but could not tell what it was. So when, after the reconnoitring, the barriers were opened, and the two bridges let down for us to enter, you may fancy our surprise to hear shouts of, "Father Moses for ever! Brandy for ever!" It brought tears to my eyes,

My waggons rolled heavily under the gates, the guard presented arms, and the crowd surrounded us, saying, "Well, Moses, thou art safe, thou art not killed!" The shouts of laughter, the people who caught hold of me to hear the account of the battle, all these things rejoiced my heart. Everybody, even the Mayor himself, wanted to speak to me, but I had not time to answer them. But all that was nothing compared to the happiness I felt when Sarah and Zeffen and my little Sâfel came running out of Frise's house, and all three rushed into my arms, exclaiming, "He is safe! he is safe!" Oh, Fritz, what are honours to such affection? What is all the glory of the world compared to the joy of meeting those we love?

I handed my musket to Sâfel, and while the veterans escorted my waggons to the Little Place, I dragged Sarah and Zeffen through the crowd to old Frise's, and when we were alone there, we began to embrace each other over again. The noise outside increased; you would have thought, to hear the rejoicing, that my brandy belonged to the town at large; but within, in the chamber, my wife and daughter melted into tears, and I saw how imprudent I had been. So, far from telling them of the danger I had been in, I said that the Cossacks had fled as soon as they saw us, and that we had nothing to do but to put in the horses and to come away.

A quarter of an hour after, when all was quiet, I came out, Sarah on one arm, Zeffen on the other, and

Sâfel in front with my gun on his shoulder; in this order we returned home to see to the unloading of the spirits. I wanted to get everything in order that very night, so as to begin to sell at cent. per cent. as soon as possible. When one has run such risks, one ought to profit by them; and if people sold their merchandise at cost price, as a great many expect them to do, nobody would risk his capital for the good of others; and even if a man were ready to sacrifice himself for the rest, he would pass for a fool, as has been seen a hundred times, and will be seen again. But no such ideas ever came into my head; I have always considered that the proper way to do business is to gain as much as you possibly can honestly and fairly; it is justice and common sense.

When we turned the corner of the market-place, we saw our two waggons standing in front of our house. The horses were taken out, and Heitz was making all haste to get out of the town with them while the gates were open, and the veterans, marching at ease, were going up the street to the infantry barracks. It was about eight o'clock. Zeffen and Sarah went into the house to go to bed, and I sent Sâfel to fetch Gros, the cooper, to unload the waggons. A great many were looking on, and offered to help us. Gros soon arrived with his sons, and we set to work.

It is a pleasant thing, Fritz, to see a dozen great casks going into your cellar, and to think, "These are all mine! They are full of spirits that have cost me

one franc a quart, and that I shall sell again for three!" That shows the beauty of trade. But every one can fancy this pleasure; I need not say any more about it.

By midnight my twelve pipes were on their stands, ready for tapping. As the crowd moved away, I told Gros to come again in the morning to help me with the mixing, and we came out of the cellar, well pleased with our day's work. He pulled to the double door of oak, I fastened it with a padlock, and went to bed at last. What a satisfaction to have property, and to know that it is safely housed! That is how my twelve pipes were saved.

You can judge now, Fritz, of the terrible anxieties and fears we had in those days. You could make sure of nothing; for you must not fancy that I was the only person who had been sleepless with trouble, there were hundreds like me. It was sad to see the looks of the townsmen morning after morning, when they heard that the Austrians and Russians were overrunning Alsace, or that the Prussians were marching on Sarrebrück, or else that there were to be domiciliary visits and extra labour-parties to wall up the posterns of the place; or perhaps they received orders to form themselves into companies of firemen, and to make away with anything and everything of a combustible nature; to make a return of the largest tax-payers, in order to their furnishing shoes, coats, bedding, and so on. In time of war the civil authority goes for nothing; they would take your last shirt with a receipt from the

p. 110.

Governor. The most notable men in the country go for nothing, when once the Governor has spoken. I have often thought that those who clamour for war, not being soldiers, are out of their senses, or else that they are half-ruined, and hope to improve their affairs by the ruin of the rest of the world; there is no other way of accounting for their conduct.

In spite of these troubles I did not lose time, and all next day I worked at mixing my spirits. I took off my coat, and kept on pumping with extraordinary perseverance. Gros and his sons carried the great cans full of water, and emptied them into the tuns I had prepared, so that by night they were full to the bung-hole of good white brandy. I had also got ready the caramel, for giving to the whole the colour of old cognac; and when, on drawing off a glass, and holding it up to the candle, I saw it was just the right tint, I was ravished with the sight, and I exclaimed, "Give cordials unto those that are in heaviness of heart, give them wine, so that they may drink thereof, and remember their sorrow no more." Old Gros stood before me smiling, and his sons looked pleased too. I filled the glass to the brim for them; they passed it from one to the other quite delighted. We came out of the cellar about five o'clock. The same day Sâfel had engaged three men to carry all our iron out under the shed in the back court. The old shop was whitewashed; Desmarets, the carpenter, was busy putting up shelves for the bottles and glasses and the pewter measures,

and his son was hard at work getting the counter ready. Everything was going on at once; as is usual when there is a great hurry, and workmen are glad to gain a tidy sum in a short time. I looked on quite pleased. Zeffen, with her child in her arms, and Sarah had come down to look on too. I showed my wife the place behind the counter, and I said to her, "That is where you shall sit with a nice pair of warm slippers on your feet, and a good fur tippet on your shoulders, and sell the brandy." She laughed with pleasure at the prospect.

Our neighbours, Bailly the gunsmith, Koffel the weaver, and others, came to look on, but they did not speak; they were astonished to see how fast everything got on. About six o'clock, just as Desmarets laid down his hammer, the sergeant came in, in high spirits. He had just left the canteen. "Well, Father Moses," he cried, "the work is almost finished, I see; but there is one thing wanting."

"What, sergeant?"

"Oh," said he, "it is all very well done, only we must blind up above, or look out for the shells!" I saw he was right, and all present were terrified, except the neighbours, who laughed at our fright. "Yes," resumed the sergeant, "we must see about that."

This conversation put an end to my joy, for I saw that we were not yet at the end of our troubles. Sarah, Zeffen, and I went upstairs, while Desmarets was shutting up. Supper was served; we sat down to table full

of thought, and Sâfel brought up the keys. All was silent in the street, except the patrol going their rounds. The sergeant came to smoke his pipe as usual. He explained how blindages were constructed. It was no use telling us it was as solid as any roof; I did not think so, and I could see by Sarah's looks that she was of my opinion. We sat there till nearly ten o'clock, and then we all went to bed.

XII.

THE ENEMY REPULSED.

It was on the 6th of January that the enemy arrived on the ascent of Saverne. It was terribly cold; our windows were covered with frost. Just at one o'clock I was awoke; the drums were beating to arms at the infantry barracks. You cannot form an idea how they sounded through the silence of night. "Do you hear that, Moses?" said Sarah, in a whisper.

"Yes, I hear," I answered, hardly daring to breathe.

In another minute others opened their windows to listen, then we heard men running, and the cry, "To arms! to arms!" It made your hair stand on end. I had just got up, and was lighting the lamp, when there was a knock at our room door. "Come in," said Sarah, trembling.

The sergeant opened the door. He was in marching order, his gaiters on, his long grey coat tucked up, his gun on his shoulder and his bayonet by his side, his cartridge-box behind him. "Father Moses," said he,

"go to bed again quietly; it is for the battalion at the barracks, it has nothing to do with you." We saw in another minute that he was right, for the drummers did not go up the street two together, as they do to call out the National Guard. "Thanks, sergeant," I said.

"Go to sleep," said he, as he was going down the stairs. The door at the end of the passage shut to. The children were awake and crying. Zeffen came in with her little Esdras in her arms, and as pale as she could be, crying out, "What is it?"

"Nothing, Zeffen," said Sarah; "nothing, my child; the drum-call was for the soldiers."

At the same moment the battalion marched down the High Street. We heard it as far as the square, and even farther, towards the German Gate. We shut the windows, Zeffen went back into her room, and I went to bed. But how could any one sleep after such a shock? My mind was disturbed with a thousand distressing thoughts. I figured to myself these Russians on the hill in the cold night, and our soldiers either marching to meet them or manning the ramparts. All the blindages, the block-houses, and the batteries inside the bastions came to my recollection, and when I reflected that these great works had been executed as defences from the bombs and shells, I exclaimed to myself, "Before these works are destroyed, every house will be shattered, and we shall be killed to the last man."

I had been for about half-an-hour lamenting in this way over all the miseries that threatened us, when a sort of rolling noise, like the roar of falling waters, was heard in the distance, in the direction of Quatre-Vents. It grew louder and louder every moment. I had raised myself on my elbow to listen, and was sure that a battle very different from that at Mittelbronn was being fought, for the roll of musketry was increasing.

"How they are fighting, Sarah! how they are fighting!" cried I, as I pictured to myself the fury of these men, slaying each other in the midnight. "Listen, Sarah; it is dreadful."

"Yes," said she; "I hope our sergeant will not be wounded—that he will come safe out of it."

"May the Lord watch over him," I answered; and I jumped out of bed and lit the candle. I did not know what I was about. I dressed myself, and then listened to that dreadful surging roll, as it was borne on the wind. As soon as I was dressed, I opened the window to try what I could see. The street was perfectly dark; but towards the ramparts, beyond the dark outline of the bastion of the arsenal, there was a red light. The smoke of powder is red, because it is lighted up by the incessant firing. Every window in the street was open; we could not see each other. but I heard our neighbour, the gunsmith, say to his wife, "They are hard at it there, Annette; that's the beginning of the fun; but the artillery is missing: all in good time."

The woman did not answer, and I asked myself,

"How is it possible to jest on such subjects? it is against nature." The cold was so sharp, that I shut our window in a very few minutes. Sarah got up, and lit the fire in the stove. All the town was in motion; the people talking, the dogs barking. Sâfel, who had been woke up by all this noise, came and dressed himself in our warm room. I looked mournfully on the poor little fellow, half asleep as he was; thinking that the town would soon be fired upon, that we should have to hide in cellars, and that we should all be in danger of being killed, for things that did not concern us, and to which our consent had never been asked; and I was wroth. But what grieved me most was to hear Zeffen repeating in sobs and tears, that it would have been better for her and her children to have stayed with Baruch, and all to have died together. Then the words of the prophet came into my mind: "Shall the innocent perish, and shall the just be rooted up? They that sow iniquity shall perish by the breath of the Lord; but He shall save His servant: he shall go down to the grave, full of days, like a sheaf of corn ready for the reaper." So I strengthened my heart, as I listened to the stir of terrified people running in all directions, seeking to save their property.

About seven o'clock, it was announced that the casemates were open, and that leave was given to all to come, and bring their mattresses with them; that all the tubs and coppers in every house were to be kept full of water, and the wells left open in case of fire.

Only fancy, Fritz, what ideas those orders put into our heads. Many of the women who lived near us, Lisbeth Dubourg, Bevel Ruppert, Camus' daughter, and others, came into our house, crying out, "It is all over with us." Their husbands were gone right and left, to look round, and these women hung on Zeffen's neck and Sarah's, repeating over and over again, "Oh, what misery! God help us!" I wished them far enough off, for instead of consoling us, they only added to our fear; but at such moments, when women are all crying and lamenting together, it is no use to try to reason with them, they like to give way to complaints and tears.

At about eight o'clock the gunsmith, Bailly, came to fetch his wife; he had just come from the ramparts, and he said to me, "The Russians have come down in numbers; the plain to Quatre-Vents is full of them, Cossacks, Bashkirs, wretches! Why do not they fire on them from the ramparts? The Governor is a traitor." I asked him where our soldiers were. "They are retreating," exclaimed he. "They have been bringing in the wounded these two hours, and we stand there doing nothing!" Every feature of his hard countenance trembled with anger. He took his wife away, and then others came, crying, "The enemy is advancing to the gardens on the glacis."

This intelligence surprised me. The women had gone to lament elsewhere; and just at this moment I heard a great noise of wheels in the direction of the

ramparts. I looked out of the window, and saw a great waggon coming from the arsenal: the gunners belonging to the town, Goulden, Holender, and Barrière, ran beside, and the Captain Jovis in front of it. They stopped at our door, and the captain called out, "Summon the iron merchant; tell him to come down!"

Chanoine the baker, brigadier of the second battery, was already coming up; I opened the door, and called down the stairs, "What do you want of me?"

"Come down, Moses," replied Chanoine. And I went down.

Captain Jovis, a tall, thin man, with his face bathed in sweat, notwithstanding the cold, asked me, "Are you Moses, dealer in iron?"

"Yes, sir."

"Open your shop. Your iron is required for the service of the place." I was then obliged to show all these men into my court, and to the shed where my iron was. The captain, having glanced over it, saw plenty of those cast-iron plates which it was then the custom to mortar into the back-walls of fireplaces. They weighed thirty or forty pounds apiece, and I was in the habit of selling many in the neighbourhood. There were plenty of old nails, rusty bolts, and old iron of all kinds. "This is what we want," said he; "break these plates, take the iron, and be quick about it."

Some of them set to work to break up the iron plates with our two marlins, some filled baskets with

the pieces, and ran off to empty them into the waggon. The captain, looking at his watch, called out, "Look sharp! We have just ten minutes." So all my plates and everything else were broken to bits, at least fifteen hundredweight of iron in all. As they were going out to hasten off to the ramparts, Chanôine said to me, laughing, "It will make famous grape-shot, Moses! Thou mayst get thy coppers ready, we will come for them to-morrow." The waggon then dashed through the crowd; they ran after it, and I followed too. The nearer we got to the ramparts, the more incessant was the firing. At the turning by the curé's house, two sentinels stopped every one, but they let me pass on account of my iron, which they were going to discharge.

What a sight it was! The masses of people, the smoke that enveloped the bastion, the noise, the word of command, as the infantry officers ascended the glacis, the gunners with their matches alight, the waggon-loads of cartridges and heaps of cannon-balls behind them! No, it is thirty years ago, but I have never forgotten these men with their levers drawing back the guns to load them to the muzzle. The volleys of the musketry, the word of command given by the officers, "Load!—ram home!—prime!" What enormous masses were these guns, on their carriages seven feet high—the gunners were obliged to stretch their arms as high as they could reach, to fire! Men invent instruments like these for the extermination of their kind, and they would think they did great things if they sacrificed a quarter

as much for them for the sake of comforting their fellow-creatures, or teaching them, in their youth, the means of earning a morsel of bread in their old age. Ah! those who exclaim against war, and wish to see things changed, are not far wrong.

I was in the corner, on the left of the bastion, where the steps lead down to the postern at the back of the Collége, between three or four baskets full of clay, and as high as chimney-stacks. I ought to have stayed there quietly, and have taken advantage of the first opportunity to get away; but I thought I should like to see what was going on below the ramparts: and while they were loading the guns, I crept to the level of the glacis, and lay flat down between two enormous baskets, where no ball could come, except by the greatest chance in the world. If hundreds who were killed on the bastions had done so, they would be alive now.

From this place I could see all over the white plain. I saw below the cordon of the rampart, and on the other side of the ditch, the line of our sharpshooters behind the stockades: they charged and fired without cessation, and though they were but two companies, the volleys succeeded each other without a moment's interruption. That showed the value of exercising. Farther on, the road stretched in a straight line to the Quatre-Vents. The farm Ozillo, the burying-ground, the station for post-horses, George Mouton's farm, the little inn, the "Roulette," the great road between the poplars, all were full of Cossacks and such like wretches, and they

came full speed to the very gardens to reconnoitre the place; at least, I suppose that was what they wanted; for to run the chance of being hit by a ball for nothing at all is not natural. These fellows wore large grey cloaks, loose boots, and a kind of fox-skin cap, like the Baden peasants; their beards were long, they were mounted on small horses, lance in hand, a pistol in their belt, and they swept over the plain like birds.

We had not yet fired upon them, for they had kept themselves so scattered as not to be worth the shot, but their trumpets now sounded the recall in the direction of the "Roulette," and they began to collect behind the out-buildings of the inn. A party of about thirty of our veterans, who were still on the road to the burying-ground, fought as they retreated. They got a few steps forward, hastened to reload, then turning round took aim and fired, and resumed their march through the hedges and brushwood, which there had not been time to clear away on that side of the town. Our sergeant was of the number; I recognized him at once, and I trembled for him.

As soon as those veterans had discharged their pieces, five or six Cossacks would come up like the wind, with their lances levelled; but our men did not care: they got behind a tree, and levelled their bayonets; others of the veterans got farther on the road, and when there were many, some reloaded their muskets, while the others parried the strokes aimed at them by the Cossacks. No sooner was the cartridge bitten, than

they fled right and left, with their lances raised. Some of them turned for a moment to fire their great pistol, like brigands, as they were. Then ours resumed their march towards the town.

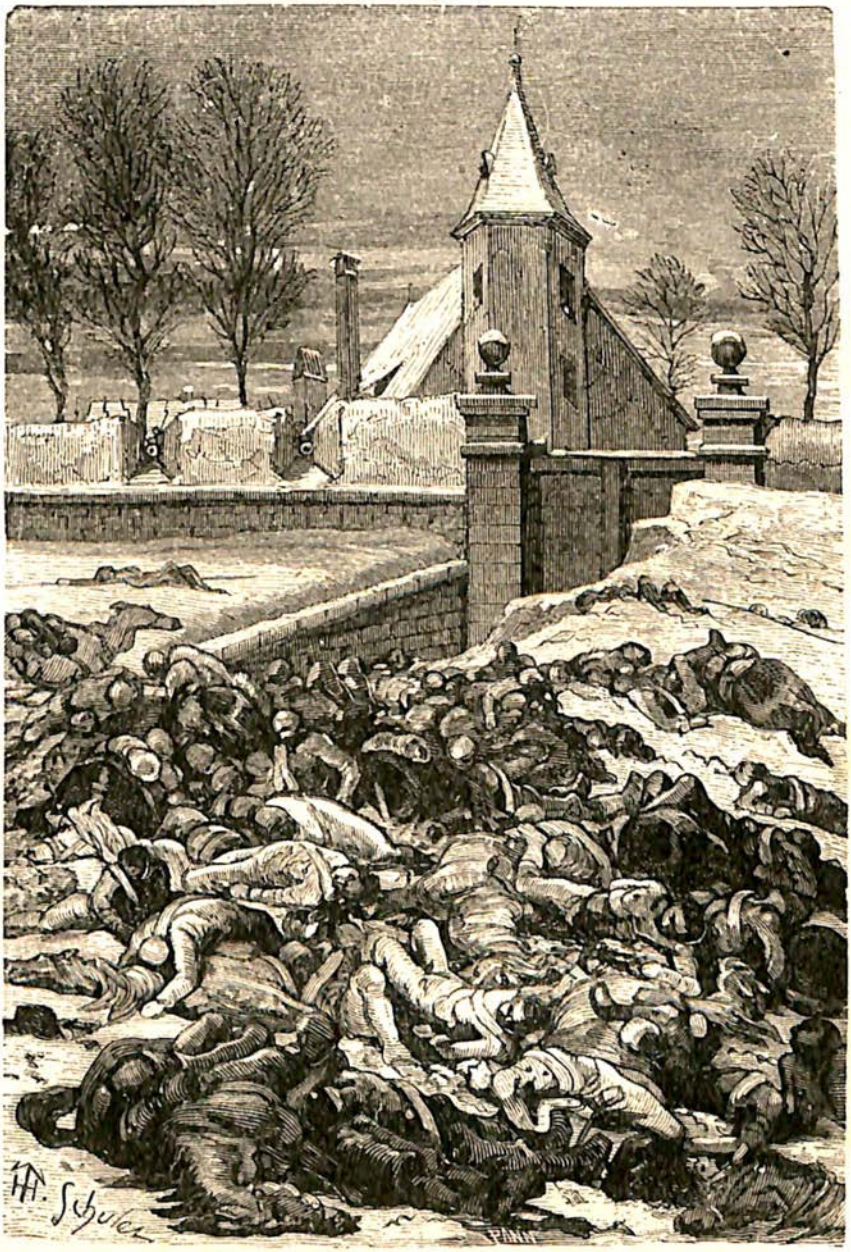
These old soldiers, with their shakos firmly set on their heads, their great-coats reaching to their ankles, their swords and cartridge-boxes at their backs, were something wonderful to look at; they were as calm reloading and firing in the midst of these savages, as if they had been quietly smoking their pipes in the guard-house—so that after seeing them come three or four times safely out of the mêlée, you began to think it was easy work.

Our sergeant was in command of these men. I understood then how it was that his officers always took his part against the townsmen; there were not many like him to be found. I should have liked to cry out to him, "Make haste, sergeant! make haste!" They were in no hurry—neither he nor his men. Just as they reached the foot of the glacis, a band of Cossacks, seeing that they were going to escape them, came galloping up in two lines to cut off their retreat. It was a dangerous moment, and instantly they formed in square. As for me, I felt a cold shiver run down my back as if I had been there. The sharpshooters behind the palisades left off firing, for fear, no doubt, of touching their comrades; our gunners on the bastion leaned over to see how far the line of the Cossacks stretched. There were seven or eight hundred, crying,

"Hourra! hourra! hourra!" like so many ravens... Several officers, in little caps and green cloaks, galloped by the lines, sword in hand.

I believed our poor sergeant and his thirty men were lost; I thought of the grief Sarah and Sâfel would feel. But just as the Cossacks deployed in a half-circle on the left of the advanced guard, I heard the word of command, "Fire!" I turned my head; old Goulden applied the match, the fuse blazed, and at that instant the bastion, with its great baskets of clay, shook to the very rocks of the ramparts. I looked towards the road —it was covered with men and horses. At the same moment there was a second discharge, and I may say that I *saw* the grape mow down the Cossack cavalry like a scythe. Those who were living and breathing a moment before were now nothing; some were seen trying to rise, the rest fled.

The file-firing was resumed, and our gunners, without waiting for the smoke to clear, reloaded so quickly that the two volleys were once more heard simultaneously. That discharge of old nails, bolts, and cast-iron made such carnage, that some days afterwards the Russians begged a truce to bury their dead. There were four hundred lying in the ditches by the road-side. I saw this with my own eyes; and if you want to know where they buried these savages, you have only to go up the road to the graveyard. On the right, on the other side of the way, in M. Adam Ottendorf's orchard, you will see a stone cross in the hedge;



p. 124.

they were all put into a great pit there, and their horses with them.

It is easy to fancy the joy of our artillerymen when they beheld the massacre. They flourished their ramrods in the air, and cried, "Vive l'Empereur!" The soldiers answered from the covered way, and a general shout went up to heaven. Our sergeant, with his thirty men, came quietly up to the glacis. They hastened to open the barrier for them; and then the two companies went down together into the ditch, and came up through the postern. I waited for them at the top. When our sergeant appeared, I seized him by the arm, crying, "Ah, sergeant, I am so happy to see you safe." I should have liked to kiss him.

He smiled, and shook hands with me. "You saw the engagement, then, Father Moses?" said he, winking. "We showed them what stuff the 5th is made of."

"Yes, yes, indeed! you made me tremble for you."

"Pooh," said he, "that was a trifle; you will see different things from that."

The two companies of sharpshooters formed once more, and all the town cried, "Vive l'Empereur!" They came down the Rue du Rempart, surrounded by the crowd. I kept near our sergeant. At the moment the detachment turned our corner, Sarah, Zeffen, and Sâfel shouted from the window, "The veterans for ever! The 5th for ever!" The sergeant saw them, and nodded to them. As I went in, I said to him, "Sergeant, do not forget your glass of kirschenwasser."

"Never fear, Father Moses," he answered.

The detachments went on to the square to dismiss the men, as usual; and I went upstairs three steps at a time. I had scarcely got into the room, before Zeffen, Sarah, and Sâfel embraced me as if I had come from the wars; the little fellow, David, clung to my leg, and the others asked what had passed. I was obliged to tell them of the attack, the discharge of grape, the rout of the Cossacks. But the breakfast was ready, and I was famishing. And I said, "Let us sit down to table. You shall know all the particulars presently. Let me take breath."

At that moment the sergeant came in, looking delighted. He dropped the butt-end of his musket on the floor, and we were all going up to speak to him, when we perceived a tuft of red hair on the point of his bayonet, and it made us shudder. "Oh, what is that?" said Zeffen, covering her face with her hands.

He did not know it was there, and looked quite surprised. "Oh, that," said he, "is the beard of a Cossack, which I carried off as I passed; that is nothing." And he went out to put his gun in his room. But we were all shocked, and Zeffen could not get over it. When the sergeant came back, she was sitting in the arm-chair, with her face hidden in her hands. "Oh, Madame Zeffen," said he, sorrowfully, "you will hate the sight of me now."

I thought, too, that Zeffen would be afraid of him; but women admire men who risk their lives right and

left. I have noticed it a hundred times. And with a smile Zeffen replied, "No, no, sergeant; these Cossacks ought to stay in their own country. They are the cause of all our misery! You defend us, and we all love you."

I begged him so earnestly to stay and breakfast with us, that at last he opened the window and called out to the soldiers who were passing to tell them at the canteen not to expect Sergeant Trubert to breakfast.

All being now quiet, we sat down to table. Sarah went below to fetch a bottle of good wine, and we breakfasted. We had coffee, too, and Zeffen insisted on pouring out the sergeant's. He was delighted, and said, "You are too good, Madame Zeffen!" She laughed, and we were all quite happy. When it came to the kirschenwasser, the sergeant began to tell us all about the night attack: the way the Würtembergers were posted at the "Roulette;" how they were obliged to dislodge them by breaking in the two great doors; the arrival of the Cossacks at dawn; and the deploying of the two companies as sharpshooters. He related everything so well, that you might fancy you saw it.

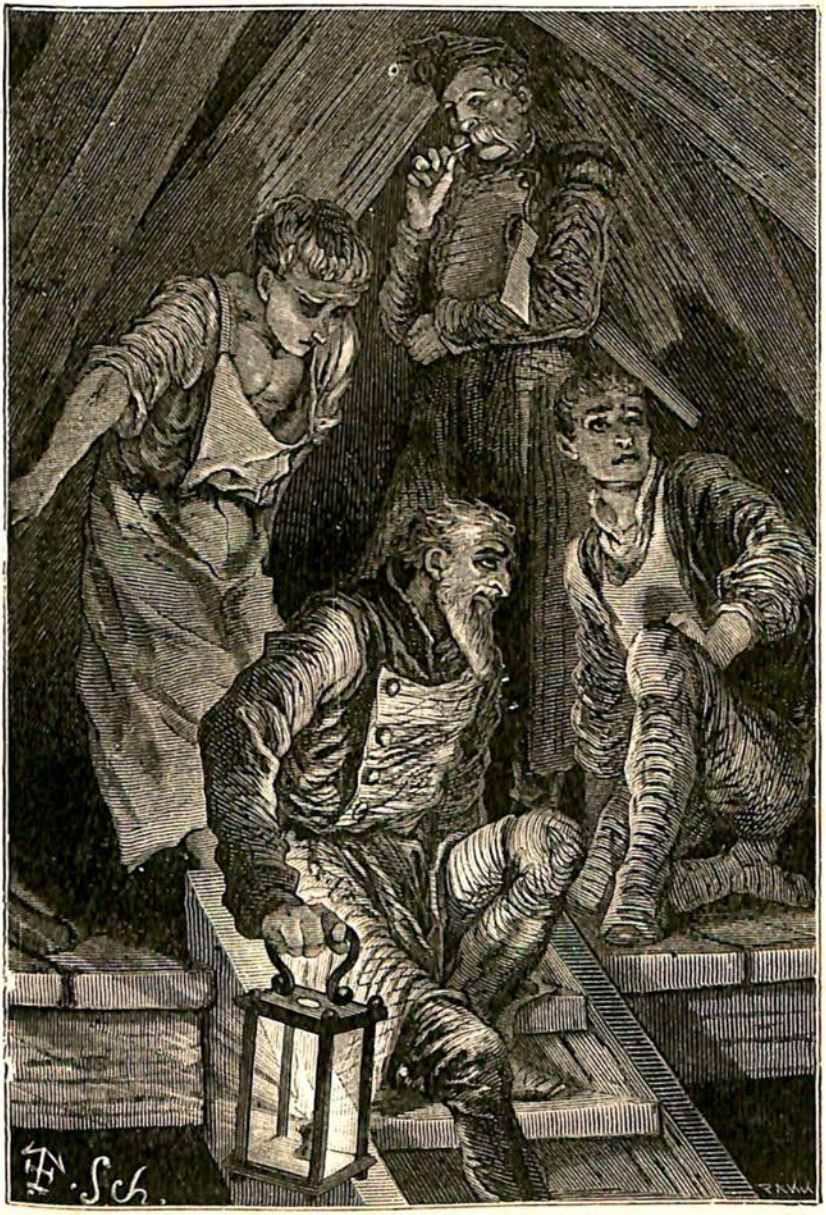
About eleven o'clock, when I had the bottle in my hand to pour him out another glass, he rose, wiping his moustaches, and said, "No, Father Moses, I must not sit here feasting all the morning; to-morrow, or the day after, we shall have the bombs here. It is time to make the loft bomb-proof." These words made us all grave. "Let me see," said he: "there are some logs

lying in your back-yard, and some beams against the wall. Can we carry them up between us?" He was going to take off his great-coat; but as the beams were very heavy, I went to fetch the two brothers Carabin, Nicholas, nicknamed the "Chauvier," and Mathis, the sawyers. They came directly, and carried up the wood. They had brought their saws and hatchets. The sergeant made them saw the beams into lengths to line the inside of the roof. He worked himself like a carpenter. Sarah, Zeffen, and I, looked on. But as this work lasted a long time, they went down to prepare the supper; and I went down with them to get a lantern to light the workers.

I was coming quietly up again, when all of a sudden I heard a dreadful roaring noise close to the roof, that nearly made me drop the lantern out of my hand. The Carabins turned pale, and looked at each other; the sergeant said, "It is a cannon-ball." At the same instant the report was heard in the distance. Then I felt a terrible sensation in my inside; all my strength left me, and I thought, "Since one ball has come, there may be two, three, four!" The Carabins thought the same, no doubt, for they put on their jackets.

"What is the matter?" said the sergeant. "That's nothing; let us go on with our work—it will be all done in an hour."

But the eldest of the two Carabins exclaimed, "Do as you like! As for me, I don't stay here; I have



p. 128.

children to think of." And while he was speaking, a second ball came roaring over the roof, worse than the first; and five or six seconds after, we heard the report. One thing that surprised me was, that, though the Russians fired from the skirts of the Bois-de-Chênes, at a good half-hour's distance, we saw the red light flash before the little windows, and it even came through the tiles. The sergeant tried to persuade us to stay, saying, "Two balls never pass in exactly the same direction; since one has gone close to the roof, we are in a safe place. Come! go on with the work." But it was no use, we could not. I put the lantern on the floor, and went down. I felt as if my thighs were broken in two, and I was ready to sit down on every stair.

There was more noise out of doors than even in the morning. Chimneys were falling; women running to the casements; but I took no notice of anything—I was too frightened myself. The two Carabins had gone off pale as death. I was ill all night. Sarah and Zeffen were not very easy either.

The sergeant worked on alone, placing and fixing the logs. About midnight he came down, and said, "Father Moses, the loft is blinded, but your men are cowards—they left me all alone." I thanked him, and told him we were all ill, and that for my part I had never felt anything like it in my life. He laughed. "I know what it is," said he; "the conscripts always feel like that when they hear the first cannon-ball. But

one soon gets over that; it only wants a little use." Then he went to bed, and every one except me was soon asleep.

All this, Fritz, was only the beginning of the blockade; you shall now hear the miseries we had to bear during three months.

XIII.

A DESERTER CAPTURED.

THE next day, however, the whole town was joyful. A number of people came down from the ramparts at about seven o'clock, and as they went along our street they cried out, "They are all gone away. There is not a Cossack to be seen, either in the direction of Quatre-Vents, Bois-de-Chênes, or anywhere else. Vive l'Empereur!"

Every one was running to the bastions. I had opened one of our windows, and leant out in my night-cap. It was damp and cold, the snow was falling off the roofs and melting into mud in the street. Sarah, who was making the bed, called out, "Shut the window, Moses; we shall all catch cold."

But I paid no attention to what she said: I was thinking, "The vagabonds have had enough of my old iron; they have found out that it flies far. Experience is a good thing."

I could have stayed there till night, listening to the

neighbours talking of the discomfiture of the Russians, and to those who came down from the ramparts, declaring that there was not one to be seen. Many said that no doubt they would come back again, but that appeared to me contrary to common sense. It was to be supposed that the hated race would not quit the neighbourhood immediately; that they would pillage the villages, and feast themselves at the peasants' expense; but that their officers would stir them up to come back to be killed, and that the soldiers would be fools enough to obey them, was what I could not fancy.

By-and-by Zeffen came into the room to dress the children, and then I shut the windows. A good fire was roaring in the stove, Sarah was preparing the breakfast, and Zeffen began to wash little Esdras in a basin of warm water. "Oh," said she, "if I could but hear from Baruch, all would be well." David was playing with Sâfel on the floor, and I thanked God for having ridded us of those wretches.

While we were at breakfast, I said to my wife, "All is going well. We shall be shut up for a time, till the Emperor has gained his victory; but they will not fire on us any more, they will be satisfied with blockading us. Bread, and wine, and meat, and brandy will grow dearer and dearer. Now is the time for us to sell, or else it may happen to us, as it did to the Samaritans when Benhadad besieged their city: there was a great famine, and an ass's head was sold for fourscore pieces

of silver, and the fourth part of a cab of dove's dung for five pieces of silver. It was a good price, but the sellers held back still, when the Lord caused the Syrians to hear a great noise of chariots and horses, even the noise of a great host, and they arose and fled; and the people having pillaged their camp, a measure of flour was sold for a shekel, and two measures of barley for a shekel. Let us, then, sell while things are at a reasonable price, and let us begin as soon as we can."

Sarah approved of what I said; so, after breakfast, I went down to the cellar to continue the lowering and colouring of the spirits. Many of the tradespeople had resumed their occupations; Klipfel's hammer was heard on the anvil; Chanoine, the baker, had his rolls in his windows; and Tribolin, the druggist, blue and red bottles in his. Confidence had returned. The townsmen who were gunners had taken off their uniforms, the carpenters had returned to finish our counter, and the sound of the saw and the plane filled the house. Every one was glad to go to his business, for war brings cuts and wounds, and the sooner it is over the better.

As I carried the water to one tun and another down below, I could see the folk stop in front of our shop, and I heard them say to each other, "Moses will make a pretty penny by his brandy. These rascally Jews always know which way the wind lies; last month, when we were selling, he was buying; now we shall be

shut up, and he may sell for any price he likes." You may fancy how pleased I was. The greatest happiness a man can have is to succeed in business; everybody is forced to say, "That man has neither armies, nor generals, nor cannon; he has nothing but his wits, like anybody else. When he makes money, it is to himself that he owes his prosperity, and not to the courage of others. More than that, he ruins nobody; he neither robs nor kills; whereas in war the strongest crushes the weakest, and often the best."

I laboured, then, with the greatest perseverance, and I should have kept on till night, if Sâfel had not come to call me to dinner. I had a famous appetite, and I was coming upstairs, glad enough to sit down to table with my children, when the drum-call began to beat on the Place d'Armes, before the Hôtel de Ville. During a blockade the court-martial is always sitting at the Mairie, to try those who do not answer to the roll. Many of the neighbours were already leaving their houses, with their muskets on their shoulders. I ran upstairs as fast as I could, and swallowed my soup, and a morsel of bread and a glass of wine. I was quite pale. Sarah, Zeffen, and the children were all silent. The drums continued to beat; they came down our street, and stopped at last on the Petite Place, in front of our house. Then I ran to take my cartridge-box and musket. "Ah!" said Sarah, "we thought to be quiet, and now it is all beginning over again." And Zeffen, who said nothing, melted into tears.

At that moment the old Rabbi Heymann came in, with his fur cap drawn over his ears. "In heaven's name, let the women betake themselves to the casemates. A flag of truce has come, and they threaten to set fire to the town if the gates are not opened. Away with you, Sarah! away with you, Zeffen!"

You may imagine the cries of the women when they heard that. My own hair stood on end, and I exclaimed, "These wretches have no shame in them. They have no pity for women and children. May the curse of Heaven fall upon them!" Zeffen threw herself into my arms. I did not know what to do.

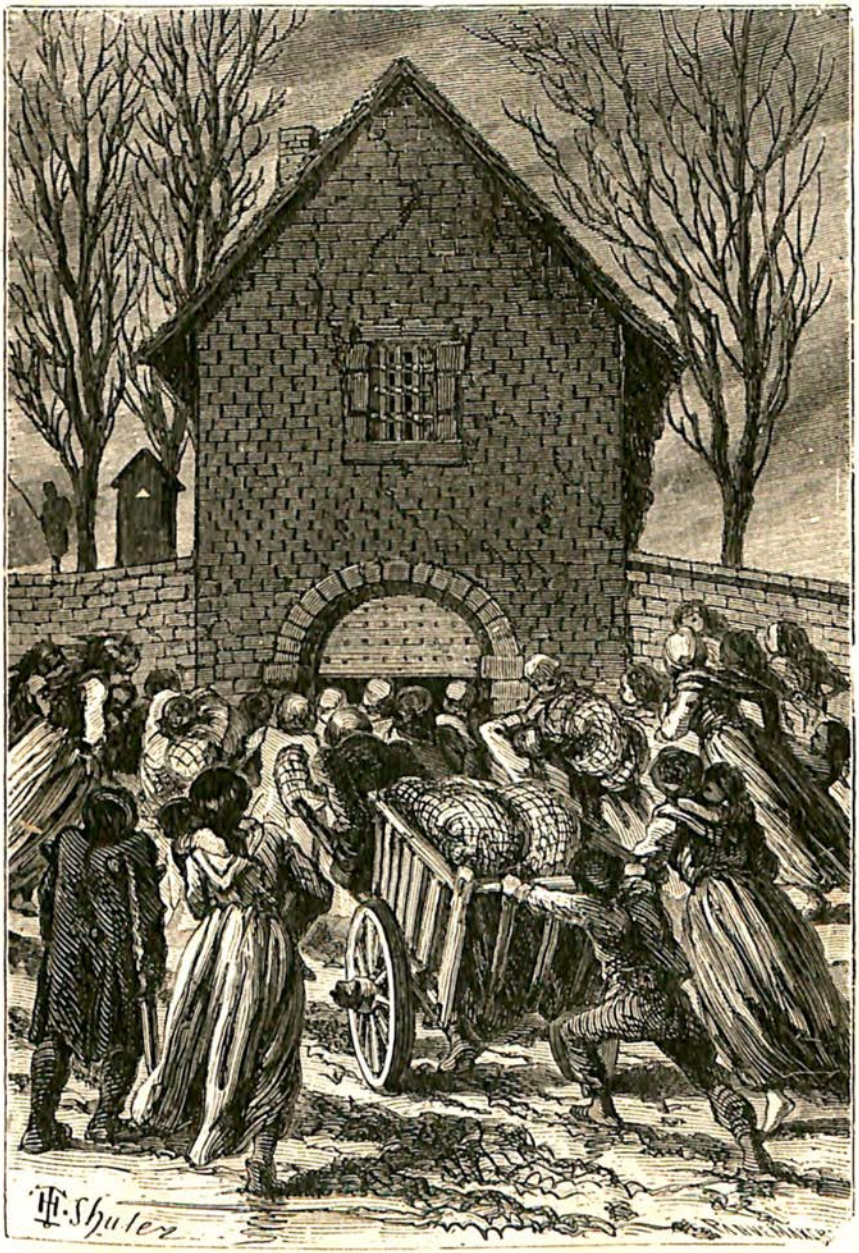
The old Rabbi said, "These men are doing to us as we have been doing to their country. The word of the Lord is fulfilled, 'As thou hast done to thy brother, so shall it be done unto thee.' But the women have no time to lose."

The drums had left off, and my knees knocked together. Sarah, who never lost courage, said, "Make haste, Moses, to the Place! make haste, or else you may be put in prison!"

She was a sensible woman; she pushed me out by the shoulders, and, in spite of Zeffen's tears, I went downstairs, calling out, "Rabbi! I put my trust in you. See them safe!" I did not see where I was going. I scrambled through the heaps of snow, and made my way somehow to the Hôtel de Ville, where the national guard was already assembled. I arrived just in time to answer to my name, in what a state of mind you may suppose,

for my abandoned family—Zeffen, Sarah, Sâfel, and the little ones—were still before my eyes. The rest did not look very well pleased either; they were all thinking of those belonging to them. The Governor Moulin, the Lieutenant-Colonel Brancion, and the Captains Renvoyé and Vigneron Grébillet, however, appeared quite at their ease. They were ready to let everything be burnt, and everybody massacred, for the Emperor. The Governor even said, laughing, that he would surrender the town when the shells set his handkerchief on fire in his pocket. From that speech you may judge of the common sense of such a creature!

Well, while they were inspecting us, the old men, the women, and children were crossing the Place to get to the casemates. I saw our little hand-cart go by with the mattresses and blankets rolled up in it. The old rabbi was pulling in front, and Sâfel pushing behind. Sarah was carrying David, and Zeffen, Esdras. They were walking through the mud, with their hair flying loose, as if they had rushed out of a burning house; but they walked on in silence. I would have given my life to go to help them, but I dared not quit the ranks. Ah, the old men of my times saw sad things. How often have they thought—Happy is he who is alone in the world; he has only himself to think of, and has not to witness the sighs and tears of those he loves, without having the power of consoling them. Immediately after the review, the gunners were told off to the powder-



p. 136.

houses, to serve out the ammunition, and the firemen to the Old Market-house, to get out the fire-engines, and we ourselves, with half a battalion of the 6th Light Infantry, to the guard-houses of the Place, to do duty on watch and as patrols. The two other battalions had already marched to the advanced parts of Trois-Maisons, Fontaine du Château; to the block-houses, the half-moons, and to the farm Ozillo and Maison Rouge, outside the town.

Our guard at the Mairie consisted of thirty-two men —sixteen of the Line below, sixteen of the national guard above stairs—commanded by Desplaces Jacob. Burrhus's room served us for a guard-house. It was a large room, supported by such joints and beams as are not to be seen in our forests now-a-days.* A large cast-iron stove stood on a paved square space on the left of the door, a number of zigzag pipes went into the chimney on the right, and heaps of logs for the stove lay at the farther end of the apartment. It seems to me I can still see the place. The snow-water which had dripped from those who entered, formed pools on the floor. I never saw a more miserable day in my life, not only because of the bombs and balls which we expected every minute to come and set fire to everything, but on account of the slush and mud, and the chilling damp, which penetrated to your very bones, and the voice of the sergeant, which was incessantly

* It is the custom in France to cut down most of the trees in the numerous forests every sixteen years for fuel.

calling out, "Such a one, march! such a one, forward! it is his turn." And then the jokes and insults of these tilers and cobblers and plasterers, with their patched blouses,* their shoes down at heel, their old caps, without a bit of a front, sitting in a circle round the stove, with their rags sticking to them, calling out, "Moses, pass the jug!" "Moses, let me light my pipe at yours." "Oh, the rascally Jews! when they risk their lives for the sake of their own goods, they must needs be proud of their doings. Good-for-nothing creatures!" And then they winked and nudged each other, and made faces. Some of them wanted me to go and buy tobacco for them out of my own money—in a word, every affront that the rabble could put on an honest man. Oh, it enrages me to think of it.

It did not smell very sweet in the guard-house, for there was a roaring fire in the stove; and as soon as the men came in, with their old clothes soaked through, they began to smoke their pipes. Every now and then I was obliged to go outside to breathe the fresh air; but the cold drippings from the gutters were blown into my face by the wind, and I was glad to get in again.

When I remembered it all afterwards, I thought that if it had not been for these annoyances, the idea of Sarah and Zeffen and the children shut up in a cellar would have broken my heart, and that these vexations kept me from going out of my senses.

* The blouse, a kind of blue smock-frock, is universally worn by the labouring classes.

Well, it went on till evening, coming in, going out, sitting down, smoking; then tramping the town in the rain, or standing sentry for hours together at the posterns.

About nine o'clock, when all was dark without, and nothing to be heard but the patrols, the cry of the sentinels on the ramparts, "Sentries, look out!" or the tramp of our men up and down the great wooden staircase of the Mairie, the idea came into my head that the Russians had only threatened us to try to frighten us, and that the night would go over without any firing.

In order to make friends with the people, I had asked Monborne to give me leave to fetch a pitcher of brandy; and he let me go directly. I had taken the opportunity to eat a crust and to swallow a glass of wine at home. I had returned, and all the men at the guard-house began to be civil. They passed the pitcher from one to the other, saying that my brandy was very good, and that the sergeant would give me leave to go and fill it again whenever I liked. Monborne replied, "Yes; as it is Moses, he shall have leave, but nobody else." In a word, we were all quite comfortable together, not one of us thinking of the bombardment, when a red light flashed through the lofty windows of the room. We all turned round, and a second after the howitzer was heard in the direction of Bigelberg. Then a second and a third flash passed through the large dark apartment, and showed us the opposite houses. You cannot

form an idea what it was like, Fritz. The corporal, Winter—an old soldier, who worked for Tribou—stooped very quietly, and, as he lit his pipe, said, "Ah! that is the opening of the ball!" And, almost immediately after, we heard a shell burst on the right, in the infantry's quarters, another on the left, on the Place, in Piplinger's house, and another near our house, at Hemmerlé's. That is thirty years ago, but I cannot help shuddering when I think of it. All the women were at the casemates, except a few old servants, who would not leave their kitchens, and who were crying, "Help! Fire!"

We all thought that we were lost; but the old soldiers, sitting round the stove with their pipes in their mouths, did not seem to care; they were men who had nothing to lose. But the worst was, that, at the moment when the cannon of the arsenal and the powder-houses began to reply to the Russians, and when every pane of glass in the old Mairie was shaking, the sergeant, Monborne, cried out, "Somme, Chevreux, Moses, Dubourg, forward!"

The idea of sending fathers of families prowling about the streets in the mud, at the risk of meeting with splinters of shells, or having brickbats or whole chimney-stacks falling on them, is quite unnatural; only to hear the order, filled me with rage. Somme and the fat innkeeper Chevreux turned round, angry enough too. They were ready to cry out, "It is shameful!" But that creature Monborne was the

sergeant, and nobody dared speak or even look; and as the corporal, Winter, took down his gun and made a sign to us to come on, we all took our muskets and followed him.

As we came down the stairs of the Mairie, every crick and cranny was lighted up at each shot. Our twenty-four-pounders were firing, and shook the old Place to the very foundations; you would have thought it was going to tumble down. Under the entrance below, and across the Place d'Armes, this red light illuminated all things, from the heaps of straw in the road to the roofs of the houses, and showed you the sloppy pavement, the pools of water, down to the very end of the street leading to the cavalry barracks, and even the sentry in his box by the great gates. Oh, what a spectacle! We thought it was all over with us.

Two bombs passed over the town at this moment; they were the first I had seen. They went so slowly, that it was easy to follow their course across the dark sky. They both fell in the ditch outside the hospital. The charge had been too powerful, fortunately for us. I did not speak, nor did the others; all of us had plenty to think of. The cry of "Sentries, look out!"* that passed from bastion to bastion all round the place, warned us of the terrible danger we were in.

The corporal, Winter, in his old, washed-out blouse, and his dirty cotton nightcap, marched in front of us; his shoulders forward, his musket at his back, a short

* "Look out!" *i. e.*, "Attention!" in military phrase.

pipe in his mouth, and the falot * hanging on his arm, calling out every now and then, "Look out when a shell bursts! Throw yourselves flat down. Do you hear?" I always thought that fellow hated the townsfolk, and that he said this to increase our fears.

A little farther on, at the top of the blind alley where Cloutier lived, he halted us. "Come on!" he cried, for we were marching one after the other in the dark; and when we came to him, he said, "Hallo, there, you fellows; try if you cannot keep step! Our patrol is to see that nothing catches fire. As soon as you see a shell drop, Moses must run and snatch out the fuze!" At the same time he burst into such a fit of laughter that I could not restrain my anger: "I did not come here to be jeered at," I said; "if I am to be treated like a fool, I will throw down my gun and my cartridge-box, and go to the casemates!"

Then he laughed louder than ever, exclaiming, "Moses, do not forget the respect due to thy superiors; beware of the court-martial!" The rest would have been ready to laugh too, but the guns of the arsenal were just then fired. At the same time, a shell exploded in the street of the Capucins, and all the chimney and half the roof of Spick's house came tumbling down with a terrible crash. "Forward!" cried Winter. Every one was grave by this time. We followed the falot towards the French Gate. Behind us, in the Rue des

* A vessel full of ignited tallow, such as may be seen burning in front of shows at English country fairs.

p. 142.

Capucins, a dog was howling dreadfully. Now and then Winter stopped, and we all listened; but nothing was stirring, and nothing to be heard but the cries of the dog, and those of the warning sentries, "Look to yourselves!" The town was as quiet as death.

We ought to have turned into the guardhouse, for there was nothing to be seen; all the same, the falot went on unsteadily in the direction of the gate: Winter had drunk too much brandy! Chevreux said, "We are not wanted in this street, and we shall not prevent the balls from flying about." But the corporal still called out, "Are you coming?" and we were forced to obey.

Opposite the stables belonging to Genodet, at the beginning of the old hay-lofts of the gendarmerie, a lane turned off on the left, towards the hospital. It was full of dung-heaps and the drainings from them—a drain, in fact. Well, that wretch of a Winter thought proper to go along there; and we were obliged to follow him, feeling our way by the old tumble-down walls. We thought we should never get out of this place, but when we came to where the great heaps of manure were, as usual, piled up against the grating of the sewer, we began to see where we were.

The night appeared to us less dark by comparison. The French Gate and the line of the fortifications stood out against the sky; and just then I saw a figure gliding between the trees on the top of the rampart. It was a soldier, stooping so low that his hands almost touched the ground. There was no firing in that direction.

The light from the guns passed over the roofs from a distance, and did not reach the footway. I caught Winter by the arm and pointed this man out to him, and in an instant he hid our falot under his blouse. The soldier, whose back was turned toward us, stood upright; he looked about him, and appeared to be listening. He remained so for two or three minutes, and then went over the railing at the corner of the bastion, and we heard something grate along the wall of the rampart. Immediately Winter set off running, calling out, "A deserter! To the postern!"

There had been great talk of deserters who managed to drop themselves into the ditch by the help of their bayonets. We all ran. The sentinel called out, "Who goes there?" Winter answered, "The town patrol." He went forward, gave the pass-word, and we ran down the steps from the postern like madmen.

When we got to the bottom, there was nothing to be seen at the foot of the great bastions that are built on the rock, but the snow, some great blocks of stone, and the brushwood covered with hoar-frost. The deserter had nothing to do but to keep quiet under the bushes. Our falot only threw its feeble light to a distance of fifteen or twenty paces; we might have hunted the ditches till morning without finding him, and might even have come to the conclusion that he had got clear off. Unfortunately for him, his fears got the better of him, and we saw him making for the steps that lead to the covered way. He ran like the wind. Winter called

p. 144.

out, "Halt! or I fire on you!" but he did not stop, and we all ran after him, crying, "Stop! stop!"

Winter had passed the falot to me, to be able to run the faster. I followed at a distance, thinking, "Moses, if this man is caught, his death will lie at your door." I should have liked to blow out the falot; but if Winter had seen me, he would have been likely enough to fell me with the butt-end of his musket. He had been hoping for some time that he should have the Cross of the Legion of Honour, and perhaps the pension too.

The deserter ran then to the steps. All at once he perceived that the ladder which replaces the eight lowest had been removed, and he stopped, astonished. We came nearer and nearer; he heard us, and set off faster than ever towards the half-moon. The poor fellow kept stumbling over the heaps of snow; and every time Winter pointed his musket at him, crying out, "Halt! surrender!" But he got up and went on running.

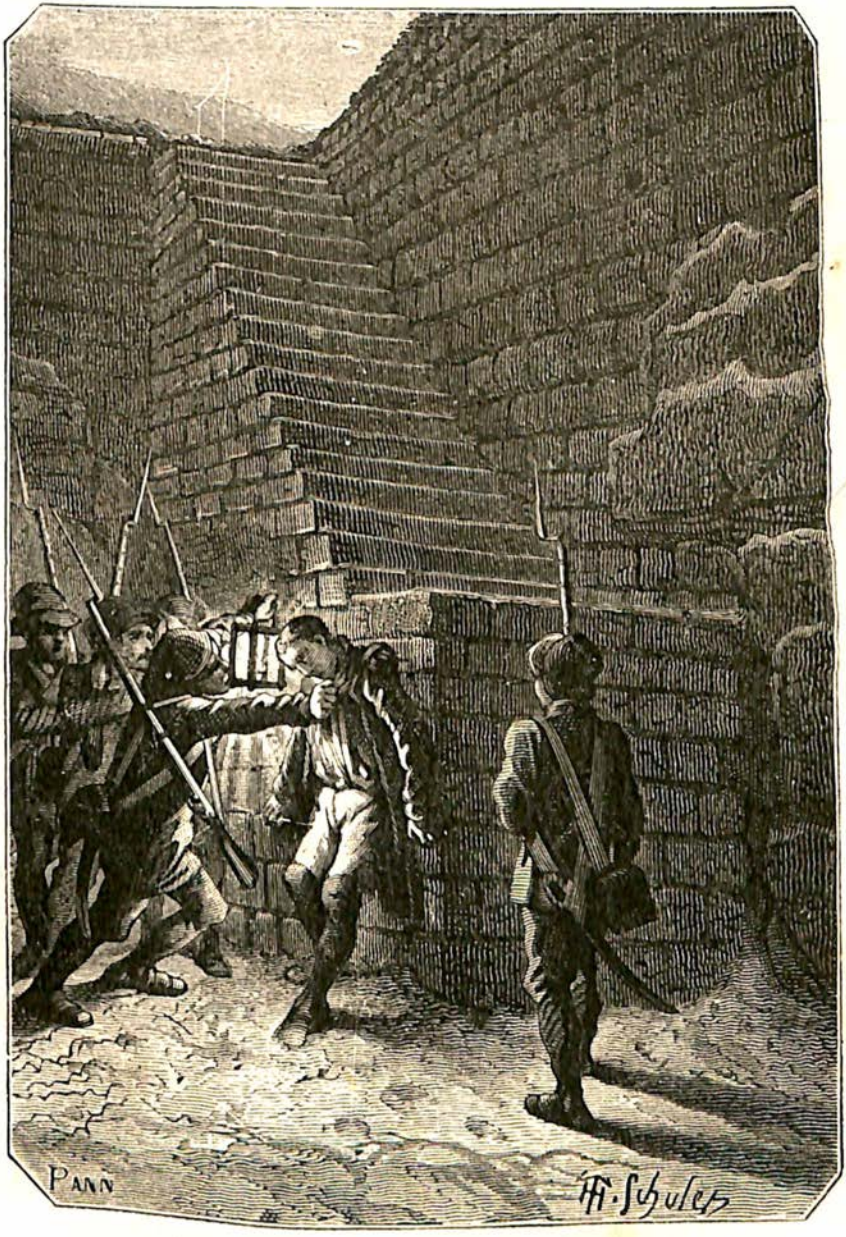
When he reached the drawbridge, we thought we had lost him; and Winter began to swear, and called to me to come up; and then we saw him leaning against the wall as pale as death. Winter took him by the collar, and said, "I have got you." Then he tore off his epaulette, saying, "You are unworthy to wear that. Come along!" Then he dragged him out of the corner, raised the falot to his face, and we saw a handsome fellow of eighteen or nineteen years of age, tall and slender, with a slight fair moustache, and blue eyes.

When I beheld him so pale, with Winter s hand on his throat, I thought of his father and mother, and my heart sank. I could not help saying, "Come, come, Winter, he is a mere boy—a child; he will never do it any more."

But Winter, who fancied he had secured his cross, turned on me furiously, saying, "I tell thee what, Jew, if thou dost not hold thy tongue, I will stick thee with my bayonet." I had a horror of that man—there are wild beasts in the human race. Chevreux, Somme, and Dubourg said nothing.

Winter began to march towards the postern, keeping his hand on the deserter's collar. "If he lags," cried he, "drive him along with your muskets. Ah, villain! you desert in the face of the enemy, do you? Your business is settled. By next Tuesday you will be under the turf of the half-moon. Will you come along? Take the butt-end of your muskets to him, I say."

It was sad to hear the sighs of the unfortunate creature, overcome with terror at being caught, and the certainty that he would be shot. You could hear them at fifteen paces off, and the sweat stood on my forehead as I listened. And then, from time to time, he turned round and looked at me with his large blue eyes, as if to say, "Save me!" If there had been only Dubourg and Chevreux with me, we would have let him go; but Winter would sooner have killed him. In this way we reached the postern. At the top, a sergeant and four men from the next post were waiting for us.


PANN
H. Schulz

"Who have you there?" demanded the sergeant.

"A deserter," replied Winter.

The sergeant looked at him, and said, "Bring him to the guard-house."

"No," said Winter, "we shall take him to the guard-house with us."

"Take two of my men with you," said the sergeant.

"We don't want them," replied Winter; "we took him, and we can guard him."

Then the sergeant perceived that we wanted to keep all the honour to ourselves, and he said no more.

We resumed our march, the prisoner, without his shako, and his clothes torn to pieces, marching in the midst of us. We soon reached the Petite Place, and we had only to cross the Old Market-house to reach the guard-house. The guns of the arsenal were still firing; and, just as we drew near the entrance of the prison, a flash of light fell full on the great door of the black-hole and its massive bolts. This light seemed to give the prisoner fresh strength; he left his collar in Winter's hands, and threw himself upon us. Winter had nearly fallen backwards, but he recovered his balance, and rushed on the deserter, calling out, "Ah, villain! you try to escape, do you?"

We saw no more, for the falot fell to the ground. Chevreux shouted for "The guard! the guard!" In another minute, half of the infantry watch came up under arms. Then we discovered the prisoner leaning on the railing between the pillars; the blood was

coming out of his mouth, and he was trembling from head to foot. Winter seized him by the nape of his neck, and said to the officer, "This is a deserter, lieutenant; he has tried to get away twice, but he had to do with Winter."

"Good," replied the lieutenant; "summon the gaoler."

Two soldiers obeyed the order. Many of our comrades of the national guard were looking on; but nobody spoke. Though men's hearts are very hard, when they see a poor wretch in such a plight, and when they say to themselves, "He will be shot the day after to-morrow," they do not feel inclined to talk, and many would even set him free if they could.

In a few minutes, Harmentier appeared, in his knitted jacket, and with his bunch of keys in his hand. "Lock up this man," said the lieutenant to him; and, turning to the deserter, he said, "March on." He stood up, and followed Harmentier. The gaoler opened the two massive doors of the cell; the prisoner entered passively, the heavy bolts were fastened, and the key turned the great lock. The lieutenant said, "Every man to his post." And we took our way to the Mairie.

These events had so overcome me, that I did not think of my wife and children. But when I was once more in the great smoky room, where they were all laughing and rejoicing over the capture of a poor deserter, I reflected that I was the cause of this misfortune, and grief took possession of my soul. I lay

down on the camp-bed, thinking of all sorts of miseries, of Zeffen, of Sâfel, of my grandchildren, who would perhaps be arrested too some day because they did not love war. And I remembered the words of the Lord when the people desired a king, saying unto Samuel, "Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee; for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected Me, that I should not reign over them. Howbeit, yet protest solemnly unto them, and show them the manner of the king that shall reign over them. Say thou unto them, He will take your sons, and appoint them for himself, for his chariots, and to be his horsemen, and to run before his chariots. He shall take them for his instruments of war. He will take also your daughters to be confectionaries; and he will take your fields and your vineyards and your olive-yards, even the best of them, and give them to his servants. He will take your men-servants and your maid-servants, and your goodliest young men. He will take the tenth of your flocks, and ye shall be his slaves. In that day ye shall cry, but the Lord shall not hear."

These thoughts made me wretched; my only consolation was, that my sons Fromel and Itzig were in America, and I resolved to send Sâfel and David and Esdras there too, when the time should come. I mused on these things all night. I did not listen to the laughter or the jokes that were going round among the vagabonds. Now and then, one of them would come and shake me, saying, "Now, Moses, get up and fill

thy pitcher with brandy; the sergeant gives leave." But I paid no attention to them.

By four o'clock, the guns of the arsenal having dismounted the Russian pieces on the hill of Quatre-Vents, the patrols ceased. At seven, we were relieved. We went down, one at a time, with our muskets on our shoulders. We formed in rank in front of the Mairie, and Captain Vigneron gave the word of command—"Shoulder arms! Present arms! Lodge arms! Break the ranks!" Every one went his way, glad enough to lay down his glory.

I intended to run home and leave my gun, and then hasten to the casemates, to fetch Sarah, Zeffen, and the children; but what was my joy to see Sâfel standing at the door! I had scarcely turned the corner, when he ran up to me, saying, "We have all come back; we are all waiting for you." I stooped down to give him a kiss. At that moment Zeffen opened the window, and held up Esdras, and Sarah stood smiling behind. I ran upstairs, blessing the name of the Lord, who had delivered us from evils, and I said in my heart, "The Lord is pitiful and merciful. The glory of the Lord endureth for ever. Let Him rejoice in His works."

XIV.

BURGUET'S VISIT TO THE DESERTER.

It was one of the happiest moments of my life, Fritz. I was no sooner in the room than Sarah and Zeffen were in my arms. The little ones came round me and kissed me. Sâfel had hold of my hands. I could not speak, but my eyes filled with tears. Ah! if we had had Baruch with us, we should have been quite happy.

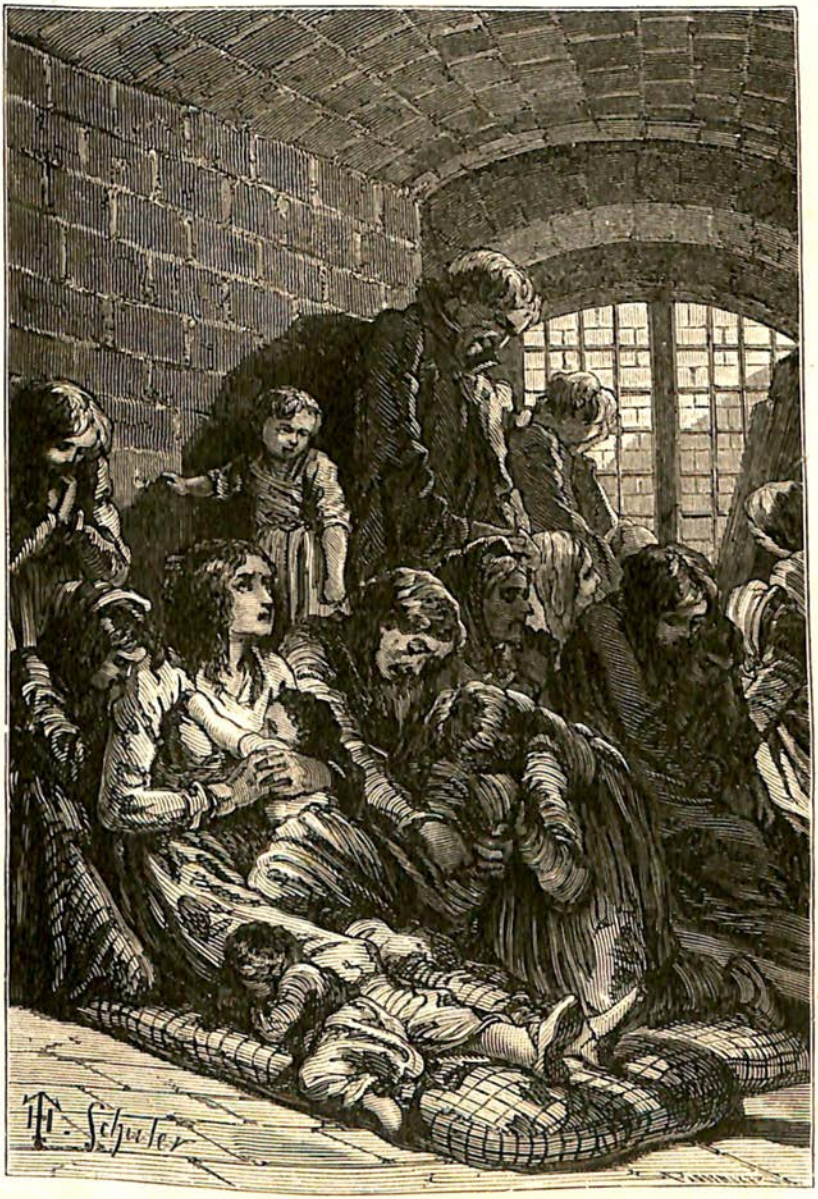
After a while, I went to put away my gun, and to hang up my cartridge-box. The children laughed, and the house was alive once more. And when I came back with my old loose coat on my back, and my woollen stockings on my feet, and sat down in the old arm-chair by the table, where Zeffen was pouring the soup into the porringers, when I looked at all the smiling faces, the little stretched-out hands and eager looks, I could have sung like a bird over the nest where its young ones are opening their beaks and flapping their little wings. I blessed them silently again and again; and Sarah, who saw what was passing in my mind, said,

"Yes, Moses, they are all there, even as they were yesterday; the Lord hath preserved them."

"May the name of the Lord be blessed for ever and ever," I replied.

While we were at breakfast, Zeffen told me that when they got to the great casemate, it was full of people lying on mattresses in every direction. Some kept screaming, others were too terrified; then there were plenty of vermin, and, in addition, the water dropped constantly through the roof. The children could not sleep, and did nothing but cry, and every minute the voices of the old men were to be heard, saying, "Ah! our last hour has come. Ah! how cold it is! Ah! we shall never get over this." Then she spoke of the perfect silence that reigned when the cannon began to fire, at about ten o'clock—those shots that had succeeded each other slowly at first, and then followed like the roaring of a tempest; of the flashes that pierced through the blindage of the door; of the old dame Christine Evig, who told her beads aloud, and how all the other women responded. While Zeffen was telling me this, she pressed her boy Esdras closer to her, and I kissed David, who was sitting on my knee; as I thought how much the poor children had suffered.

In the midst of the joy of seeing all my family safe, the picture of the deserter in his cell came before me. He too had parents. When you think of all the anxiety a child's father and mother have had, of the nights


F. Schuler

they have passed in soothing him when he cried, of their fears when he was ill, of their hopes as he grew up; when you picture to yourself a few old soldiers sitting round a table in judgment, and quietly sentencing this child to be shot, it makes you shudder. And when you must add, "If it had not been for me, this boy would have been free, and on the way to his native village; he would have knocked, perhaps to-morrow, at his father's door, saying, 'Open; it is I,'" it is enough to drive you mad. I dared not tell my wife and children of the arrest of the unhappy young man; I sat there quite pensive.

The detachments from the Roulette, Trois Maisons, and La Fontaine du Château passed down the street; groups of children ran about, picking up the fragments of the shells; the neighbours stood in knots, talking over the events of the night, the roofs that had been damaged, the chimneys that had been thrown down, the frights they had had. You could hear them chattering and laughing merrily. I noticed afterwards that it was always so after a bombardment; as soon as the storm was over, they forgot all about it, saying, "Let us be merry; the enemy is routed."

While we were sitting thinking, some one was heard on the stairs. We listened, and our sergeant, with his musket over his shoulder, his great-coat and his gaiters covered with mud, looked in at the door, saying, "Well done, Moses—well done! you have done great things to-night, I hear."

"Eh! what has he done, sergeant?" asked my wife, in astonishment.

"What, has he not told you of his brilliant exploit, Madame Sarah? Has he not told you how the National Guard Moses, being on patrol on the Bastion de l'Hôpital, about nine o'clock, saw and afterwards arrested a deserter, who was in the act of making his escape? It is so entered in on the charge, by Lieutenant Schnindret."

"But it was not I alone," said I, in the greatest distress; "there were four of us."

"But it was you who put them on the scent; you went into the ditch, you carried the falot. Father Moses, you should not try to lessen the glory of your deeds. They are going to promote you to be a corporal. The court-martial will sit to-morrow morning at nine o'clock. They will take care of your friend, never fear!"

You may fancy my countenance, Fritz, when I heard this. Sarah and Zeffen and the children looked at me. I did not know what to say.

"Come, shake hands," said the sergeant; "I must go and change my uniform; and we will talk the matter over again, Father Moses. I always said you would come to something at last." He gave one of his sly smiles, and winked, and then went along the passage to his room.

My wife was very pale. "It is all true, then, Moses?" she said.

"Ah! I did not know he was trying to desert,

Sarah," I replied. "And, besides, he ought to have looked well about him; he ought to have gone to the Place de l'Hôpital, taken a turn round the dung-heaps, and even have gone into the lane, to make sure there was nobody there; it is his own fault. I did not know; I——"

But Sarah cut me short, exclaiming, "Fly to Burguet's, Moses; if this man is shot, his blood will be on us and on our children. There is not a moment to be lost." She threw up her hands, and I went out, in sad trouble.

My great fear was not to find Burguet at home, but fortunately when I opened the door of his room, on the first floor of the house where Cauchois used to live, I saw Vésinaire in the act of shaving him, as he sat in the midst of the old books and papers. There he was, the napkin under his chin. "Ha! it is you, Moses," cried he, in a merry voice; "to what do I owe the pleasure of your visit?"

"I am come to ask you to do me service, Burguet."

"If it is in the shape of money, it will be very difficult," said he. He laughed, and his servant, Marie Loriot, who heard what was said from the kitchen, opened the door, and popping her rough red head in, cried, "Difficult! I should think so, indeed! Vésinaire has not been paid for shaving these three months, have you, Vésinaire?" She said it with the greatest seriousness, and instead of being angry, Burguet laughed heartily. I have always thought that, clever man as he

was, he must have kept that fool of a woman for the sake of laughing at her at his ease. He never could be persuaded to part with Marie Loriot.

While Vésinaire went on shaving him, I told him all about our patrol, and the arrest of the deserter, entreating him to defend the poor fellow. I told him, too, that he alone could save him, and by so doing restore peace not only to me, but to Sarah and Zeffen, and my household—that we were all wretched, and our only hope was in him.

"Ah! Moses," he said, "you know my weak side; if you tell me that I alone can save this man, I must try. But it will be a difficult matter. There have been many desertions within the last fortnight. The court will be glad to make an example. It is a serious business. You have got some halfpence, I dare say, Moses; give Vésinaire twopence to get himself a taste of something."

I gave Vésinaire four sous, and he went out with a deep bow. Then Burguet finished dressing, and taking my arm, said, "Let us go and see what can be done." So we went downstairs together, to go to the Mairie.

A great many years have gone by since that day, but it seems to me I can still hear Burguet calling out as he reached the entrance, "Ho! sergeant, let the turnkey know that the prisoner's counsel is here."

Harmentier came, made his bow, and opened the prison-door. We went down into that foul cell, and

on the straw, in the right-hand corner, we saw the prisoner drawn up into a ball. "Get up," said Harmentier; "here is your counsel."

The unfortunate creature stirred, and sat up in the dark corner. Burguet bent down to him, saying, "Come, come! a little courage! I am come to arrange for your defence." The other began to sob. When a man is prostrate, his clothes torn off his back, and when he has been beaten till he can scarcely stand on his legs, when he knows he has transgressed the law, and that he must die without ever again seeing those he loves, he becomes as weak as a child. Those who beat their prisoners are miserable wretches.

"Come, let us see," said Burguet; "sit down on the edge of the bedstead. What is your name? Where do you come from? Harmentier, give him some water to wash his face."

"There is some, Monsieur Burguet,—there is some in the corner."

"Very well. Compose yourself, young man." The more gently he spoke, the more the poor fellow shed tears. At last he said that his family lived at Gérarmer, in the Vosges; that his father's name was Belin, and that he was a fisherman at Retournemer. Burguet was obliged to drag every word out of him; but he would have every particular about the father and mother, the brothers and sisters. I recollect that the father had served under the Republic, and that he had been wounded at Fleurus; that the eldest brother had died

in Russia, and that he himself was the second that had been drawn in the conscription, and that there were three sisters at home, all younger than himself. It all came very slowly; the blows Winter had given him had so prostrated him, that hardly any life seemed left in his body. You will have guessed, Fritz, that there was something more—it was a young man, recollect—something that brought to my memory the time when I went from Phalsburg to Marmontier in a couple of hours to visit Sarah. Oh, poor soul! When he told us that story, with sobs, his face hidden in his hands, my very heart melted. Burguet, too, was quite overcome. In about an hour we left, and as we were going out, he said, "Come; let us hope the best. You will be tried to-morrow. Keep up your courage. Harmentier, give this man a great-coat, it will be terribly cold here in the night. This is a serious business, young man, but not hopeless. Try to present yourself as decently as possible to-morrow. The court is always better disposed to prisoners when their appearance is in their favour."

As soon as we were outside, he said, "Moses, send this man a clean shirt. His clothes are torn, let him have a complete suit. It is always by appearances that soldiers judge of a man."

"Depend upon me," I replied.

"Now," said Burguet, "I must go home; I want to reflect. It is fortunate that the brother died in Russia, and that the father has served in the army; it may help us."

We had reached the corner of the Rue du Rempart; he went on his way, and I went home somewhat less miserable than before. You may imagine my grief, Fritz; when one has always kept a clear conscience, it is very hard to bear self-reproach, and to be obliged to say to yourself, "If that man is shot; if his father and mother, and sisters, and that other one who is awaiting his return, are all covered with desolation, thou, Moses, art the cause of it all."

Fortunately there was plenty to do at home; Sarah had opened the old shop for the sale of the brandy, and it was full of people. The stock of the inn and tavern keepers had been exhausted for a week past, and they were on the point of shutting up. You may fancy, then, what a crowd there was pushing in with their cans, and barrels, and pitchers, and the old drunkards elbowing their way through. It was more than Sarah and Zeffen and Sâfel could do to serve them.

The sergeant said we should want a picket at the door to prevent disputes, for many called out that they were not served in their turn, and that one's money was as good as another's. Many years will go by before such a crowd is seen again at any shop in Phalsburg. I just told my wife that Burguet would defend the deserter; and then I hastened down to the cellar to fill the two casks that supplied the counter, for they were already empty. A fortnight after, Sarah doubled the price: two pipes had been sold, and the rise did not lessen the crowd. Men can always find money for

brandy and for tobacco, when they have none to buy bread. That is why the Government have taxed these two articles more highly than any others; if they were higher still, the consumption would not decrease; but the poor children would die of starvation. I have seen that; and when I think of the madness it is, I am astonished that it should be so. Well, that day we were obliged to serve till seven o'clock at night, when the soldiers must be in their quarters. The pleasure of making money had put the deserter out of my head, and it was not till after supper that I remembered him. I did not say a word on the subject; we were all so tired, and so pleased with our day's work, that we did not care to distress ourselves; but when Zeffen and the children were gone, I told Sarah all about our visit to the prisoner, and that Burguet had some hope. She was very glad to hear that. By nine o'clock we were asleep, trusting to the mercy of God.

XV.

TRIAL OF THE DESERTER.

BELIEVE me, Fritz, fatigued as I was, I did not sleep much that night. The thought of the deserter haunted me. I was sure that if he were shot, Zephen and Sarah would never be consoled; I knew that the Christians would say, "You see Moses, that looks so respectable there. Well, during the blockade he had a poor deserter taken up and shot. Trust to a Jew's looks after that!" That is just how they would have spoken, for the only consolation of the worthless is to make it appear that others are as bad as themselves. And then, how often should I have reproached myself for the death of this man, in my old age, and in the day of affliction—how often should I have said it was a judgment from Heaven, and that the deserter would not let me rest! I made up my mind, then, to do all I could without loss of time; and by six o'clock in the morning, I was in our shop in the market-place, with my lantern, turning over my epaulettes, and picking out

the best clothes. I tied them all up in a towel, and took them to Harmentier, just as it was getting light. The special court, that was called (I do not know why) the Conseil de Ventôse, was to sit at nine o'clock; it was composed of the major, president, four captains, and four lieutenants. The captain of the foreign legion, Monbrun, was to be Judge-Advocate, and the brigadier, Duphot, clerk of the court. Strange to say, all the town knew of it, and at seven o'clock, Nicaise, Pigot, Vinatier, and others had already quitted their miserable hovels, and filled the entrance to the Mairie, and also the staircase, and the great room above, with laughing, and whistling, and stamping, for all the world as they would at a bear-baiting at the "Bœuf." There are no such scenes in our time; praise be to God, men have grown more humane; but in those days they had more pity for a fox that was caught in a trap, or for a wolf that was led about muzzled, than for a deserter.

When I saw the crowd I lost all hope; in spite of my admiration for Burguet's talent, I could not help thinking, "This man's case is lost; who can save him, when all these people have come to see him condemned, and led off to the bastion of the Glacière, to be shot?" I was quite cast down, and I entered Harmentier's lodge trembling all over. I said, "This is for the deserter; tell him it comes from me." "Very well," said he. I asked him if he felt confidence in Burguet. He shrugged his shoulders, and replied, "An example must be made!"

The stamping and whistling continued outside; and when I got into the street, cries of "Moses! here, this way, Moses!" came from the portico, the balcony, and from all directions. I did not turn my head, and came home, very sad. Sarah handed me the summons to appear before the court-martial as a witness, which a gendarme had just brought, and till nearly nine o'clock I sat down quite pensive, behind the stove, thinking what excuses could be made for the prisoner. Sâfel was playing with the children; Zeffen and Sarah had gone down to serve in the shop.

A few minutes before nine, I set off for the Hôtel de Ville; it was already so crowded, that but for the pickets at the door, and the gendarmes inside, the witnesses could hardly have got in. Just as I reached the hall upstairs, Captain Monbrun was beginning to read his statement. Burguet was sitting opposite, with his head leaning on his hand. They showed me into a little room, where Winter, Chevreux, Dubourg, and the gendarme Fiegel, were; so that we heard nothing till we were called. On the wall it was written in large letters that those witnesses who did not speak the truth would be tried by the court, and would have the same punishment as the accused. That set me thinking, and I determined not to conceal anything. The gendarme told us, too, that it was forbidden for us to speak to each other.

In about a quarter of an hour Winter was called, and at intervals of ten minutes after, Chevreux, Dubourg,

and I. When I came into the hall, the judges were all in their places, the fat major had taken off his hat, and laid it on the table before him; the clerk was mending his pen. Burguet looked at me calmly.

They were still stamping outside, and the major said to the brigadier, "Tell the public that if that noise continues, I shall clear the Mairie."

The brigadier went out immediately, and the major said to me, "Garde National Moses, make your deposition. What do you know?"

I made a very plain statement. The deserter was on the left, between two gendarmes, and he looked more dead than alive. I should have been glad to free him of everything; but when one is afraid on one's own account, when a number of old officers in full uniform are sitting looking at you with a frown, as if they would pierce to the very bottom of your soul, the best way is to tell the truth: a father's first thought should be for his own children. So I related everything just as it was, neither more nor less.

"That will do; you may go." But seeing that Winter, Chevreux, and Dubourg were seated on the left, I went and sat down by them. Immediately after, half-a-dozen blackguards began stamping, and murmuring, "Shoot him, shoot him." The president ordered the brigadier to take them up, and in spite of their resistance, they were all put in the round-house. Silence was then restored in the court, but the movement continued outside.

"Judge-Advocate, it is your turn to speak."

I see him before me now. I can almost fancy I hear him speak. He was a man of about fifty, stocky, and short-necked, his nose was long, thick, and straight, his hair black and shining, and his eye piercing. While he had been listening, his head sunk in his shoulders turned constantly from right to left, as if it had been on a pivot; you could just see his long nose and the corner of his eye, but he never moved his elbows off the table. He looked like one of those great crows that are to be seen, apparently asleep, in a meadow at autumn, but which nevertheless see everything that is going on around them. From time to time he raised his arm, as is the manner of lawyers. He was in full dress, and spoke well; his voice was clear and strong; every now and then he stopped to see if his audience agreed with him; and when he perceived the least frown, he began directly on another tack, and made you believe him, as one may say, in spite of yourself.

When I saw how slowly and carefully he went on, forgetting nothing, so as to fully prove that the deserter was really on his road when he was arrested; that he had not only had the intention of deserting, but was already outside the place—just as guilty as if we had found him in the enemy's ranks: when he made all this clear, I was exasperated to see that it was so, and I thought, "What can any one reply to this?" And when he went on to say that the greatest of criminals is he who deserts his colours; because in so doing he

betrays his country, his family, and the authors of his being, and is unfit to live; when he said that the court should carry out the sentiments of every loyal man, of those who held the honour of France dear, that it should give a new example of its attachment to the country and to the Emperor; that it should prove to the new recruits that there was no relaxation of duty, obedience, and discipline; when he said all these things with terrible force and clearness, and when I heard every now and then a murmur of admiration and satisfaction around us, then, Fritz, I thought the Almighty alone could save the man.

The deserter stood motionless, with his arms folded on the edge of the dock, and his face bowed down upon them; he thought, no doubt, as I, as all the audience, and as the court itself did. These old officers seemed quite pleased, seeing that the Judge-Advocate perfectly well expressed what they had been thinking for a long time; and as he went on, an expression of satisfaction was to be seen on all their countenances.

It lasted more than an hour. The captain stopped for a moment sometimes, to give the opportunity of reflecting on what he had said; I have always thought that he had been Procureur Impérial,* or even something more to be dreaded by deserters. I remember that, in conclusion, he said, "You will make an example. There will be no difference of opinion among you; you will not forget that at this moment firm-

* Nearly corresponding to Attorney-General.

ness is more than ever necessary for our country's sake."

When he sat down, so loud a murmur of satisfaction filled the hall, that it spread to the staircase, and was taken up outside with cries of "Vive l'Empereur!" The members of the court turned to each other and exchanged smiles, as much as to say, "The case is clear; what is to come is for form's sake."

The noise and cries increased outside. After about ten minutes, the Major called out, "Brigadier, if that tumult continues, clear the Hôtel de Ville, and begin by the hall." Silence was immediately re-established, for every one was curious to hear what Burguet would find to reply. I would not have given a farthing for the chance of the deserter's life. "We will hear the prisoner's counsel," said the Major, and Burguet rose. Now, Fritz, if I had the least idea of being able to repeat to you all that Burguet said, in the space of an hour, to save the life of a poor conscript, if I thought I could represent to you his face, the sweetness of his voice, and his accents, which went to your very soul, his pauses, his appeals; if I had such an idea, I say, I should consider myself a creature puffed up with pride and vanity. No; nothing more beautiful was ever heard: it was not a man that spoke, it was a mother seeking to snatch her child from death. Oh, what a great thing it is to have the talent to touch the feelings of men so that they weep as they listen. But it is not talent—the heart must speak.

"Who is the man that has never committed a fault? Where is the man who has no claim to pity?" That is what he said, asking the court if there was one among them faultless; if even the bravest had not had a moment of weakness; if they had never, for a single day, a single moment, had a thought of returning to their village, when they were young, when they were eighteen years of age, when father, and mother, and the friends of childhood were all the world to them, and they knew nought beyond. A poor untaught boy, ignorant of life, brought up with no thought beyond the morrow, drafted into the army, what could be expected of him? What fault may not be forgiven him? What does he know of patriotism, the honour of the flag, the glory of his Majesty? Will he not open to these grand ideas as life advances? And then he asked these old men, whether they too had not sons; whether they were sure that at that very moment this son were not guilty of some fault the penalty whereof was death?

"Plead for him," he said. "What would you say? You would say, 'I am an old soldier; for thirty years I have shed my blood for France; I have grown grey on her battle-fields, I am covered with scars, I have gained every step at the sword's point. Ah, well. Take my epaulettes, take my orders, take all I have, but give me back my child. Let my blood wash out his fault! He knew not the magnitude of his crime, he was too young, he is a conscript; he loved us, he would but have embraced us and then rejoined his regiment. He loved

a young girl. Ah! you too have been young. Oh, pardon him. Dishonour not an old soldier in his son.' You would perhaps say too, 'I had other sons; they died for their country; for their blood's sake give me back this one—he is the last.' That is what you would say, and far better than I can, for you would be the father, the old soldier recounting his services.

"Well, the father of this youth would speak as you would. He is an old soldier of the Republic. He was perhaps with you when the Prussians entered Champagne; he was wounded at Fleurus. He is an old companion in arms. The eldest of his sons perished in Russia."

And Burguet, as he spoke, turned pale; you would have said that his strength had given way to his grief, and he was going to drop down. The silence was so great that you could hear the people draw their breath. The deserter sobbed. Every one thought, "It is all over; Burguet cannot go on, we shall be obliged to carry him out." But then he resumed in the most gentle manner, speaking very slowly. He described the daily life of the poor peasant and his wife; how that they had one, but one comfort, but one earthly hope—their child. As you listened, you saw these people before your eyes, you heard them speak, you saw the very military hat of the time of the Republic hanging over the door. And when the thoughts of all were fixed on the scene, suddenly Burguet showed them the old couple when they learned that their son had been killed,

not by the Russians, not by the Germans, but by the French. You heard the old man's cry.

Oh, Fritz, it was dreadful; I wished I could have got away. Many of the officers of the court-martial were married men; their eyes were fixed, their hands clenched, and their lips trembled. The Major raised his hand twice or thrice, as if to say it was enough; but Burguet had always something more powerful, more just, and grander to add. His discourse lasted till near eleven o'clock; then he sat down, and not a murmur was to be heard, either in the court or outside it. Then the Judge-Advocate replied, saying that "all that signified nothing; that it was unfortunate for a father to have an unworthy son, that every parent loved his child; but that desertion in face of the enemy must be put down; that if these arguments were allowed, nobody would ever be shot, that discipline would be wholly destroyed, and the army with it; and that the army was the bulwark and the glory of the land." Burguet replied almost immediately after. I do not remember what he said; it was too much for my head. But what I never shall forget is, that about one o'clock, the court having been cleared for the officers to agree to their verdict, while the deserter was being taken back to the cell, we were allowed to come in, and the Major himself, standing on the platform where the drawing of the conscription takes place, announced that Jean Belin was acquitted, and ordered him to be set at liberty forthwith.

It was the first acquittal since the departure of the Spanish prisoners before the blockade; the wretches who had come in crowds to hear a man sentenced to be shot could not believe it, and many of them grumbled out, "It is treason." But the Major ordered the brigadier, Descarmes, to take down their names, and said that they should hear more of it. Then the whole of the mob found their way downstairs in less than five minutes, and we came down too.

I had taken hold of Burguet's arm, and my eyes filled with tears. "Well, are you happy, Moses?" cried he with recovered spirits.

"Burguet," I said, "Aaron himself, the brother of Moses, and the greatest orator among the children of Israel, could not have spoken better than you; it was beautiful. To you I owe my peace of mind; whatever you shall ask me for such a service, I am ready to give, according to my means."

We came down; the members of the court followed one by one, all looking thoughtful. Burguet smiled. "Will you really give me anything I ask, Moses?" said he, stopping short under the entrance.

"Yes; there is my hand."

"Well, then," said he, "I ask a good dinner at the Ville de Metz."

"With all my heart."

Some of the townspeople, the Maire, Parmentier, the tax-gatherer, Cochois, and the adjutant, Muller, were waiting at the bottom of the steps to offer their

compliments to Burguet. And just as they were shaking hands with him, Sâfel came up and threw himself into my arms; Zeffen had sent him to hear the news. I kissed him, and said joyfully, "Go and tell your mother we have gained our cause. Tell them not to wait for me. I dine at the Ville de Metz with Burguet. Make haste, my boy." He ran off as fast as he could.

"You will dine with me, Burguet?" said Parmentier.

"No, thank you, Mister Mayor. I am engaged to Moses;—some other day."

And we entered the great corridor at the Ville de Metz arm-in-arm; there was a good smell of roast beef, for all the blockade. "Listen, Burguet," I said; "we will dine in a private room, and you must order the wines and the dishes you like best; you know more about that sort of thing than I do."

I saw his eyes sparkled. "Good, good," said he; "I agree."

In the great dining-room, some officers were dining together; they looked at us as we passed, and we bowed. I sent for the mistress, Barrière, and she came directly, her apron over her arm, and her face as smiling and jolly as usual. Burguet whispered two or three words to her, and then she opened the door on the right, saying, "This way, gentlemen, this way. You will not have to wait long." So we went into the room at the corner of the place; it was small but lofty, the two

large windows had long muslin curtains, and there was a good fire in the porcelain stove, fit for a winter's day. A servant came in to lay the cloth, and we warmed our hands the while on the marble.*

Burguet said, laughing, "I am very hungry, Moses; my defence will cost you dear."

"So much the better; it will never be too dear for what I owe you."

"Ha, ha!" said he, laying his hand on my shoulder, "I will not ruin you, but we will have a good dinner."

As the cloth was laid, we seated ourselves opposite each other, in two comfortable arm-chairs with cushioned seats; and Burguet, slipping his napkin through his button-hole, as was his habit, took up the bill of fare. He studied it a long while, for you know, Fritz, that if nightingales are the best birds to sing, they are also the most dainty in creation; Burguet was like them, and to see him meditating thus did me good. At last he spoke to the servant, slowly and seriously, saying, "So and so, Madeleine, served with such a sauce; such a wine at the beginning, such another at the end."

"Very well, Mr. Burguet," replied Madeleine, as she went out. Two minutes after, she brought us an excellent soup. Nothing better could be expected in a blockade; three weeks later the fellow to it could not be had. Then we had Bordeaux, brought to table in a hot napkin. But, Fritz, I am not going to tell you

* Forming the top of the stove.

everything we had at this dinner, though I still remember it with pleasure; you may believe me nothing was wanting, neither meats nor fresh vegetables, though both had become dreadfully dear since the gates of the town had been shut. We had even salad! Madame Barrière had some planted in her cellar, and Burguet mixed it himself. We had, too, the last pears that were seen in Phalsburg that winter.

Burguet seemed quite happy, especially when a bottle of old Lironcourt came, and we touched glasses. "Moses," said he, "if every one paid my pleadings like you, I would give up my post at the Collége; but this is the first fee I have ever received."

"And if I were in your place, Burguet," cried I, "instead of staying at Phalsburg, I would go to some great town; good dinners, handsome houses, and all the rest would soon come."

"Ah! twenty years ago that would have been good advice," said he, rising; "but it is too late now. Let us go to the café, Moses."

Burguet never omitted going to the café, at about five o'clock, to play a game of cards with the old Jew Solomon, who lived by it. He and five or six of the townsmen were the support of this man, who drank beer and coffee twice a day at their expense, to say nothing of the money he pocketed for the maintenance of his family. As for the others, it did not surprise me, they were fools; but for a man like Burguet, I could never make it out. In twenty games, Solomon

never let them win more than one or two, and that only for fear of losing his best customers by putting them quite out of heart. I had explained this fifty times over to Burguet; he always said I was quite right, but went on in his old way.

When we reached the café, Solomon was already there, in a corner of the window-seat on the left, with his dirty cap pulled over his eyes, and his greasy old coat hanging over a stool by his side, shuffling the cards by himself. He gave a side-glance at Burguet, like a bird-catcher watching for larks; he looked as if he would say, "Come, here I am, waiting for you." But Burguet, being with me, did not dare to go; he was ashamed of his weakness, so he only just nodded, and we sat down at a table on the opposite side and called for coffee.

The players soon arrived, and Solomon set about plucking them. Burguet's back was turned to their table, and I tried all I could to take up his attention, but his soul was with them, he listened to all they said, and hid his yawns with his hand.

Towards seven o'clock, when the room was full of tobacco-smoke, and the balls rolling on the billiard-tables, a young man, a soldier, came in, and looked round him on all sides. It was the deserter. He saw us at last; he drew near, cap in hand. Burguet raised his eyes, and recognized him; I noticed that his face flushed; the deserter, on the contrary, was very pale; he tried to speak, but could not.

"Well, my friend," said Burguet, "you are saved."

"Yes, sir," replied the conscript, "and I am come to thank you for myself, for my father, for my mother."

"Ah!" said Burguet, laughing, "very well, very well." Then he looked at the young man with tenderness, and said gently, "You are glad to live?"

"Oh, yes, sir, very glad," replied the conscript.

"Ay," said Burguet to himself, looking at the clock, "it would have been all over before now, poor fellow!" Then all at once he changed to "thou." "Thou hast nothing to drink my health," said he, "and I have no money either. Moses, give him five francs." I gave him ten. The deserter tried to thank me. "Now," said Burguet, rising, "go and take a glass with your comrades, and do not desert again."

He made a feint of watching Solomon's play; but when the deserter said, "I thank you too in the name of her who loves me," he looked at me askance, not able to speak, so much was he overcome by his feelings. Then I said to the conscript, "We are happy to have rendered you a service. Now go and drink your counsel's health, and behave well for the future." He looked at us as if he could not go away; his face expressed his gratitude better than any words he could have said. At last he went out very slowly and bowing low, and Burguet finished his coffee.

We mused a few minutes on what had taken place. But I began to think it was time to go home. Burguet was ill at ease; he got up every minute to look into the

hands of the players, going from one to the other with his hands behind his back; then coming to sit down opposite me again. I did not want to be a check upon him any longer, so about eight o'clock I wished him good-night, and he looked glad of it. "Well, good-night, Moses," said he, as he accompanied me to the door. "My compliments to Madame Sarah and Madame Zeffen."

"Thank you, I will not forget." I was glad to find myself on the way home. I reached our door in a few minutes. Sarah was soon aware how happy I was, for when I met her at the door of our little kitchen, I gave her a good kiss. "It is all right, Sarah," I said; "all has gone well."

"Oh, yes," said she; "so I see." She laughed; and we went together into the room where Zeffen was undressing David. The poor little fellow came in his shirt, and held up his face to be kissed. Whenever I dined out, I brought him home something from the dessert; and though he was half asleep, he soon found the way to my pocket. The greatest happiness of grandfathers, Fritz, is to see their grandchildren give signs of sense and intelligence. Even little Esdras, whom Sarah was rocking to sleep, saw that something was going on, and he stretched out his little hand, as if he would say, "I like cakes too."

We were all very happy. As soon as I was seated, I related all the events of the day. I told them of the eloquence of Burguet, and of the happiness of the poor

deserter. All the family listened with the greatest interest. Sâfel was on my knees, and he whispered in my ear, "We have sold three hundred francs' worth of brandy." This was very agreeable news. When one has laid out their money, they are glad to see the profits coming in.

About ten o'clock, Zeffen wished us good-night; and I went down to fasten the door, and to put the key under for the sergeant, in case he came in late. While we were preparing to go to bed, Sarah repeated what Sâfel had already told me, adding that we should be well off by the time the blockade was over, and that the Almighty had succoured us in these great troubles. We were contented, and had no fear for the future.

XVI.

A SORTIE OF THE GARRISON.

For some days nothing particular occurred. The Governor had all the small shrubs that were growing between the stones of the ramparts carefully pulled out, that they might offer no help to deserters; and he forbade the officers to be harsh to the soldiers, which produced the best effect. At this time hundreds of thousands of Austrians, Prussians, Bavarians, and Würtembergers passed by squadrons and regiments, beyond cannon-shot of the town, and marched towards Paris; and terrible engagements were fought in Champagne, but we did not know of them then. New uniforms were to be seen every day around the place; and from the ramparts our old soldiers recognized in turn those of all the nations against whom they had been fighting for the last twenty years.

After the drum-call, our sergeant used to take me with him regularly every day to the bastion of the arsenal. We always found some of the townspeople

there talking about the invasion, and watching the troops defile in the distance. It was astonishing to see them pass, as they did, for hours together, in the direction of Saint-Jean, on the skirts of the wood of La Bonne-Fontaine—cavalry, infantry, convoys of powder, cannon-balls, and cannon; then long lines of bayonets, helmets, and lances; cloaks of all colours, red, green, and blue: then the country covered carts; it all went on like a flowing river; and on that broad snow-covered plateau all could be distinctly seen.

Occasionally a few Cossacks or dragoons would quit the ranks and gallop to the foot of the glacis, or down the Allée des Dames, or as far as the little chapel. Immediately one of the old marines would level his gun and take aim slowly; all present would crowd round him; even the children would push their way between your legs, never thinking of ball or bomb, until the "biscaïen" * was fired! Often have I seen the Cossack or the "Uhlan" drop from the saddle, and his horse, with the bridle on his neck, gallop off at full speed, and rejoin the squadron. Then expressions of satisfaction were heard on all sides, folks climbed up the talus to look, and the marine rubbed his hands, saying, "That makes one less."

At other times you might hear these old fellows, in their ragged old great-coats, laying down a couple of sous each, to become the prize of one among them who should bring down such a sentinel or such a vidette, on

* A long-barrelled musket then in use.

the opposite hills of Mittelbronn or Biegelberg. It was a good way off, and they must have had good eyes to distinguish any one; but these men, long used to the sea, could see farther than others. "Come along, Paradis," says one, "put down your two sous; I have put down mine." And then they would fire; and they would go on again, just as if they had been playing a game of skittles. God only knows how many they killed in this way.

When I returned to my shop at nine o'clock, I used to find these marines there, drinking with the sous thus won—"the Cossack," they used to call it. They would go away rubbing the palms of their hands with the last drop of brandy, to strengthen their nerves.

I never beheld so many people in my life as during the months of January and February, 1814: it was like the grasshoppers of Egypt! How can the earth produce so many beings? Nobody can understand it. I was naturally sorry to see all these foreign troops in the country, and so was all the town—that may be supposed; but our sergeant would wink his eye, and, stretching his hand towards them, say, "All that you see going by, Father Moses, all that have gone, all that shall come, will fatten the plains of Champagne and Lorraine. The Emperor will lie in wait there for them, and will fall on them like a thunderbolt, as he did at Austerlitz, at Jena, and at Wagram. It will not be long first. Then they will retreat, but they will be pursued at the bayonet's point; we shall go out and

intercept them. Not one will escape; their account is settled. And then, Moses, you will have plenty of old clothes to sell. Ha, ha, ha! You will turn a pretty penny." He was delighted at the prospect; but you may suppose, Fritz, that I scarcely reckoned on the possession of the uniforms in question; I would rather they had been a thousand miles off. But that is how it is. What is a cause of rejoicing for one is a cause of misery for another. The sergeant's confidence in the future was so great at times, that I could not help sharing it; and I thought just as he did. We generally came down the Rue du Rempart together; he either went to the canteen, where they were beginning to serve out the rations, or he came to our house to take his glass of kirschenwasser, and to explain to me the master-strokes of the Emperor from '96 in Italy, downwards. I did not understand it at all, but I made believe to understand, and that did just as well.

Occasionally there came a flag of truce; now by the road from Nancy, then by that of Saverne or Metz. The messenger, waving his little white flag, was always accompanied by a trumpeter, who blew and then retired. The officer of the advanced guard would then go to reconnoitre, the envoy was blindfolded, and escorted through the town to the Governor's quarters. But we never heard what these people had to say, or what they wanted; the council alone knew. We lived shut up within our walls, as in a ship at sea; and you cannot think how that weighs you down in time; how dull and

spiritless you become, how miserable it is not to be able to go even on the glacis. Old men who had not left their arm-chairs for ten years, and never dreamt of stirring, grew dejected because the gates were kept shut. And then one can have no idea how hard it seems not to know what is passing, not to talk over the affairs of the country—never to see a strange face; people must be deprived of these things before they know how necessary they are to them. A mere peasant from Dagsberg, who had by any chance got into the town, would have been welcomed as a godsend, and everybody would have been running to see him, and to question him as to the state of things in France.

Ah, believe me, those who maintain that nothing is so precious as liberty are quite right; for it would be intolerable to be shut up in a dungeon, were it even as large as France. It is the nature of man to come and go, to speak, to write, to live with his fellows, to trade, to converse; take these things away, and disgust of life only remains. Governments have never recognized this simple fact; they display their power by preventing the people from living at their ease, and end by wearying them out. The true strength of a sovereign is ever in proportion to the liberty he can give, and not to that he is forced to take away. The allies understood it in regard to Napoleon; hence their confidence.

It was sadder still for us when, towards the end of January, the scarcity of food began to be sensibly felt. It was not that money was scarce, for not a farthing

went out of the town; but all things became dear: what was worth two sous three weeks before was now worth twenty. In such a state of things it is lucky to sell more than one buys. My brandy was now three francs a litre; but at the same time we were obliged to have bread, oil, and potatoes, and everything had risen in proportion.

One morning old Dame Quern came crying into my shop. She had had nothing to eat for two days, and that was the least of her trouble, she said: what she missed most was her taste of brandy. I gave it to her gratis. She blessed me a hundred times, and went away happy. Many besides her would have liked a drop. I have seen old men in the greatest distress because they had no snuff. Some even went so far as to use wood-ashes instead; that was the time when some took it into their heads to smoke the leaves of the great walnut-tree before the arsenal, and they found them answer very well. Unfortunately all that was only the beginning; we had to fast for the glory of his Majesty before we were much older.

At the end of February the cold returned; they fired about a hundred bombs into the town every night, but one gets used to all things, and at last that seemed almost natural. As soon as a shell burst, there was a rush to put out the fire, which was not difficult, as there were vessels full of water always standing ready in every house. Our guns replied to the enemy, but as the Russians fired flying pieces, and our aim could only

be taken in the direction of the flash, which was continually shifting, it was difficult to hit them. Sometimes the enemy fired balls pierced with three holes, in a triangle, and filled with highly inflammable matter; they could only be extinguished by being thrown into the water, and that was what was done with them.

There had been no fire as yet, but our outposts had been forced back, and the allies drew nearer to the place on all sides. They occupied the farm Ozillo, the Tuilerie * of Pernette, and the Maisons-Rouges, which our troops had abandoned. They were settled there with the intention of passing the winter pleasantly. They were Würtembergers, Bavarians, and other landwehr, which took the place, in Alsace, of those regular troops who had gone on to the interior. We could see their sentinels, with their muskets on their shoulders, walking the road between the poplars that leads to the Tuilerie. Thence, these troops might at any time of a dark night get into the ditch, and even attempt to force a postern. They were very numerous, and made themselves comfortable, having three or four villages close at hand, which furnished them with provisions, and the great kilns of the Tuilerie to keep them warm. Sometimes a Russian battalion relieved them, but only for a day or two, being under marching orders. These Russians bathed in the ditch behind the buildings, in spite of the ice and snow.

One and all—Russians, Würtembergers, and the

* Tile-yard.

other Germans—shot down our sentinels, and we wondered that the Governor did not send the balls amongst them. But one evening the sergeant came in in high spirits, and whispered to me, winking his eye, "If you will get up early to-morrow morning, I will show you something that will amuse you. Do not say anything to anybody—only follow me."

"Very well, sergeant," replied I.

He went to bed directly, and long before it was light—about five o'clock—I heard him getting up, which surprised me all the more as the drum-call was not beaten. I got up very quietly. Sarah, who was half asleep, said, "What is the matter, Moses?"

"Go to sleep again, Sarah," replied I; "the sergeant said he wanted to show me something."

She said no more, and I finished dressing myself.

Just at that moment, the sergeant knocked at the door. I blew out the candle, and we went downstairs. It was still quite dark.

A slight noise was to be heard in the direction of the barracks. The sergeant went that way, saying to me, "Go up to the bastion, Moses. We are going to attack the Tuilerie."

So I ran up the street, and when I arrived on the ramparts I perceived the gunners at their pieces, under the shadow of the bastion on the right. They stood perfectly still, and all was silent around. The lighted matches were stuck in the ground, and burned like stars in the firmament. Five or six, who had had a hint like

myself, were standing motionless at the entrance of the postern.

The usual cry, "Attention, sentries!" was passed on round the town and beyond; at the enemy's outposts, the "Wer da?"* and the "Souï da?"* were heard. It was very cold—a sharp, dry cold, for all the fog.

Very soon a number of men came from the town up the street. If they had kept step, the enemy would have heard them far off on the glacis; but they came without any order, and turned just by us to the steps leading to the postern. They were at least ten minutes going past. I looked with all my eyes, but I could not make out our sergeant—it was still too dark. The two companies formed in the ditch as soon as they had all passed, and everything was quiet once more. It was so cold I could not feel my feet, but curiosity kept me from going away.

In about half an hour a pale line of light stretched along the horizon in the distance. Captain Rolfo, the townspeople, and I, leaning on the wall, kept looking at the snow-covered plain, where a few German patrols could be perceived in the fog; and nearer to us, at the foot of the glacis, was the Würtemberg sentinel, stationed in the road that leads to the Tuilerie.

Everything was still grey and indistinct; but the winter sun, as pale as the snow itself, was beginning to rise above the dark line of fir-trees. Our soldiers in the covered ways stirred not. The "Wer da?" and

* "Who goes there?"

"Souï da?" were still heard. No one could have supposed that an engagement was approaching, when six o'clock struck at the Mairie; and instantly, without any word of command, our two companies came out of the covered way and descended the glacis in silence. In another moment they reached the road that passes by the gardens, and defiled to the right, following the hedges.

You cannot think how I trembled when I saw that the attack was going to begin. It was not yet very clear; but the enemy's sentinel saw, nevertheless, the line of bayonets glistening behind the hedges, and cried aloud, "Who goes there?" "Forward!" replied Captain Vigneron, in a voice of thunder; and the tramp of our soldiers was then heard on the hard ground like the noise of a falling avalanche. The sentinel fired, and then ran at full speed up the road, crying out I do not know what. About fifteen of the landwehr, who formed the advanced post under the shed where the bricks were dried, turned out immediately. They had only time to look round, and were all massacred without mercy.

We could not see very well at such a distance what was passing beyond the poplars and the hedges; but after the post was carried, the roll of the fusillade, mingled with the most horrible cries, could be plainly heard. All the unhappy landwehr who were quartered in the farm of Pernette—and many of whom, like sober citizens as they were, had undressed to sleep the better

—jumped out of window in their shirts, some with trousers and some without, with their cartridge-boxes slung over their shoulders, and ranged themselves in the great meadow behind the Tuilerie. Their officers urged them on, and their word of command was heard in the midst of the tumult. There were at least six or seven hundred there, almost naked, in the snow; and, notwithstanding the surprise of such a sudden attack, they opened a well-sustained rolling fire.

Then the two cannon of the bastion began their work. Oh, what carnage! Just as the balls reached the poor creatures and struck down numbers of them, they were ordered to close the ranks, for, as soon as our men had ransacked the Tuilerie, they rushed out and charged with the bayonet. What a situation, Fritz, for honest townsmen, bankers, shopkeepers, and such like—peaceable folk who desired nothing better than to be let live in quiet!

I have always considered that the system of the landwehr is a bad one, and that it would be much better to pay a good army of volunteers attached to their country, and well aware that the money, pensions, and orders they receive come to them, not from the Government, but from the nation—young fellows devoted to their native land like those of '92, full of enthusiasm, respected and honoured in proportion to their sacrifices. Yes, that should be it—not men who have wives and children to think of.

Our cannon-balls cut these wretched fathers and

husbands to pieces by the dozen. To complete their misery, two other companies—which the council of war had secretly sent out by the postern of the battery and by the German Gate, and who had advanced, one by the road to Saverne, and the other by that of the Petit-Saint-Jean—began to outflank them, formed behind them, and then fired on them. It must be admitted that these old soldiers of the Empire had a diabolical talent for stratagems. Who would ever have thought of such a stroke as that?

When the remains of the landwehr perceived their situation, they fled over the white plain like a flock of sparrows. Those who had not had time to put on their shoes did not feel the stones, I promise you, nor the thorns and brambles of the Fond de Fiquet either: they fled like deer, and the fattest ran as fast as the others. Our men pursued, as sharpshooters, and only stopped for a moment to aim at them, and then fire. All the opposite ascent, as far as the old beech in the meadow of Quatre-Vents, was covered with dead. Their colonel, a burgomaster no doubt, galloped in front of them with his shirt flying behind him. If the men of Baden, who were cantoned in the village, had not come to their help, they would have been exterminated. But two battalions of Badeners having deployed on the right of the Quatre-Vents, our trumpets sounded the recall, and the four companies formed in the Allée des Dames, ready for them. The Badeners then halted, and the last of the Würtembergers passed behind them, well content to

have escaped from such a butchery. They might say, "I know what war is—I have seen it."

It was now seven o'clock, and all the town was on the ramparts. Soon a thick smoke was seen to rise from the Tuilerie and the surrounding buildings. Some sappers, who had taken out faggots with them, had just set fire to the whole. The sparks were seen for awhile, and then nothing remained but blackened ruins behind the poplars.

Our four companies, seeing that the Badeners did not mean to attack them, came quietly back, headed by their trumpeter. I had gone down to the Place, near the German Gate, to see the troops come in. That was one of the things I shall never forget either. The post under arms; the veterans hanging to the chains of the drawbridge as it was let down; men, women, and children crowding into the streets; the trumpets braying on the ramparts, the bastions and the half-moons carrying the echoes to the distance; the wounded, pale and bleeding—the first to enter—leaning on their comrades' shoulders; the Lieutenant Schnindret in a chair from the Tuilerie, his face covered with the death-sweat, a ball in his side, stretching out his hand, and crying, with thickened speech, "Vive l'Empereur!" the soldiers casting the Würtemberg commandant from a litter to put one of our men in his place; the drums beating the march at the Gate, as the troops came proudly in with loaves and all sort of provisions on the point of their bayonets, to the cry of, "The 6th for

ever!" We old men alone have seen this. Ah, Fritz! things are not as they were. In my time, foreigners paid the expenses of war. The Emperor Napoleon had that good in him; he did not ruin France, but the enemy. Now it is we ourselves who pay for our glory. In those days, the soldiers brought home booty—knapsacks, epaulettes, great-coats, officers' sashes, and watches. They remembered what General Bonaparte said to them in 1796: "You have neither clothes nor shoes. The Republic owes you much, but she has nothing to give you. I am taking you to the richest country in the world. There you will find glory, honour, and riches." In a word, I saw directly that we should sell drams of brandy without end.

As the sergeant passed, I called out to him, "Sergeant!"

He saw me in the crowd, and gave me his hand, saying, "All right, Moses, all right."

Everybody laughed. Then, without waiting to see the rest go past, I hastened to open our shop in the market-place. My little Sâfel, too, had foreseen that we should do a good day's business, for, in the middle of the crowd, he had pulled me by the coat to say, "I have the key of the shop. I have got it. Make haste! Let us get there before Frichard." What it is for a child to have such natural sharpness! It is really a gift from the Lord.

We ran to the shop and opened it. Sâfel stayed there while I just ran home to eat a crust, and to get a

good supply of coppers and small change to trade with. Sarah and Zeffen were at the counter, serving. All was going on well, as usual; but, a quarter-of-an-hour after, the ranks being broken, and the guns in their place in the barracks, the crowd that came to my shop in the market, to sell coats, knapsacks, watches, pistols, cloaks, epaulettes, &c. was so great, that, if it had not been for Sâfel, I never could have attended to them.

I had the things for nothing, as one may say. These fellows never thought of the morrow; all they cared for was to have tobacco, and their glass of brandy, and the other gratifications that are to be found in every garrisoned town. In six hours that day, I stocked my shop with coats, great-coats, trousers, good strong boots of real German leather of the best quality, and all kinds of things, to the amount of fifteen hundred francs, and I sold them in due time for six or seven times as much as I had given for them. All these landwehr were well-to-do citizens, rich even, and dressed with care and comfort. I bought, too, many watches: the old watchmaker, Goulden, would not have them because they had been taken from the dead.

But what gave me more pleasure than all the rest, was that Frichard had been ill for three or four days, and could not come to open his shop. I laugh even now when I think of it; the villain got the jaundice in consequence, and never recovered his colour while he lived.

About noon, Sâfel went to fetch our dinner in a basket; we ate in the shop, not to lose customers, and

we could not get away till dark night. Scarcely was one party gone, than another came, and often two or three at a time. I was ready to drop with fatigue, and so was Sâfel; the love of trade alone kept us up. I remember, too, that on going homeward a little after seven o'clock, we saw at a distance that the other shop was full of people. My wife and daughter could not shut them out; they had raised the price, but the soldiers did not care; so that, not only the French money they had just received from me, but also the florins of the Würtembergers found their way into my pocket.

It is a good thing, Fritz, when you have two trades that help each other; never forget that. But for my brandy, I should not have had the money to buy so many things; and but for the shop in the market, where I paid money down for the booty, the soldiers would not have had the means of drinking my brandy. It is quite clear that the Lord favours the lovers of peace and order, if only they make the best of their opportunities.

At last we could stand it no longer, and notwithstanding the complaints of the soldiers, we were obliged to shut up, and leave trade till next day. After supper, about nine o'clock, we were all sitting round the old lamp counting our money. I put three francs' worth of coppers in a roll, and then piled the rolls on a chair by my side, and the heap very nearly reached the table. Sâfel put the silver money in the bowl. The sight gave us great pleasure, and Sarah said, "We have sold twice

as much as on any other day. The more we raise the price, the more they buy." I was going to reply, that there should be moderation in all things, when the sergeant came in to take his usual glass. He had his great-coat on, and a sort of knapsack of red leather hanging over his shoulders. "Ha, ha!" cried he, at the sight of the heap of money. "You ought to be satisfied with your day's work, Moses."

"Pretty well, sergeant," replied I, gaily.

"I should think so," said he, sipping the glass of kirschenwasser that Zeffen had just poured out, "I should think so; one or two sallies more, and you will be colonel of the shopkeepers. Well, I am glad of it." Then laughing out, "Look here, Father Moses, see what I have got," cried he. "These rascals of 'Kaiserlichs' deny themselves nothing." At the same time he opened the knapsack, and pulled out a pair of lined gloves trimmed with fur, then some comfortable woollen socks, and a large horn-handled pocket-knife, with fine steel blades. He opened them, saying, "There is everything you can think of in it—a pruning-knife, large knives, small knives, even a file."

"That is for the nails, sergeant," said I.

"Ah, I should not wonder," said he; "that fat landwehr was as clean as a new pin. I dare say he did file his nails. But stop a bit." My wife and children were looking on with their eyes wide open. He put his hand into a sort of pocket-book in one side of the knapsack, and drew out a lovely miniature, surrounded by a

circle of gold, larger than a watch. "Look at this; what might it be worth?"

I looked, and so did Sarah, and then Zeffen and Sâfel. We were all astonished at the beauty of the workmanship, and affected too, for the miniature represented a young fair woman, and two beautiful children, as fresh as rosebuds.

"Well, what do you think of it?" asked the sergeant.

"It is very beautiful," said Sarah.

"Ay, but how much is it worth?"

I took the miniature in my hands, and after having examined it, I answered, "To anybody but you, sergeant, I should say it was worth fifty francs; but the gold alone is worth more than that. I think it is worth at least a hundred; we can weigh it."

"And the portrait, Father Moses?"

"The portrait is no use to me. I will give it back to you; there is no sale for such things in these parts, they are only valuable in families."

"Good," said he; "we will talk about it some other time." He put the miniature into the knapsack, and then asked me if I could read German.

"Perfectly," said I.

"Well, then, I am curious to know what this Kaiserlich had to write about. See, here is a letter. He meant surely to send it to Germany by the officer in charge of the baggage, but we came too soon. What has he got to say?"

He handed me a letter directed to "Madame Roedig, à Stuttgard, Bergstrasse, No. 6." This is the letter, Fritz; I have always kept it; it will tell you more of the landwehr than I could.

"Biegelberg, Feb. 25, 1814.

"DEAR AURELIA,—Your welcome letter of the 29th of January reached Coblentz too late; the regiment had just marched for Alsace.

"We had a miserable time of it—rain and snow. The regiments arrived first at Bitche, one of the most terrible forts, built upon rocks up into the very sky. We were to have assisted in blockading it, but we received orders to march on to the fort of Lutzelstein, in the mountains; we stayed two days at the village of Petersbach, to summon that place to surrender. But the veterans who held it having answered us with cannon-shot, the colonel did not order the assault; and thanks be to God, we received orders to blockade another fortress, surrounded with villages which supply us with provisions in abundance. It is Phalsburg, two leagues from Zobern; we replaced the Austrian regiment of Vogelgesang, which has marched for Lorraine. Your dear letter followed me all the way, and it now fills me with happiness. Kiss little Sabina and our darling Heinrich a thousand times for me, and I send you the same, my beloved wife. Ah, when shall we be once more together in our pretty little shop? When shall I see once more my bottles ranged and labelled on the

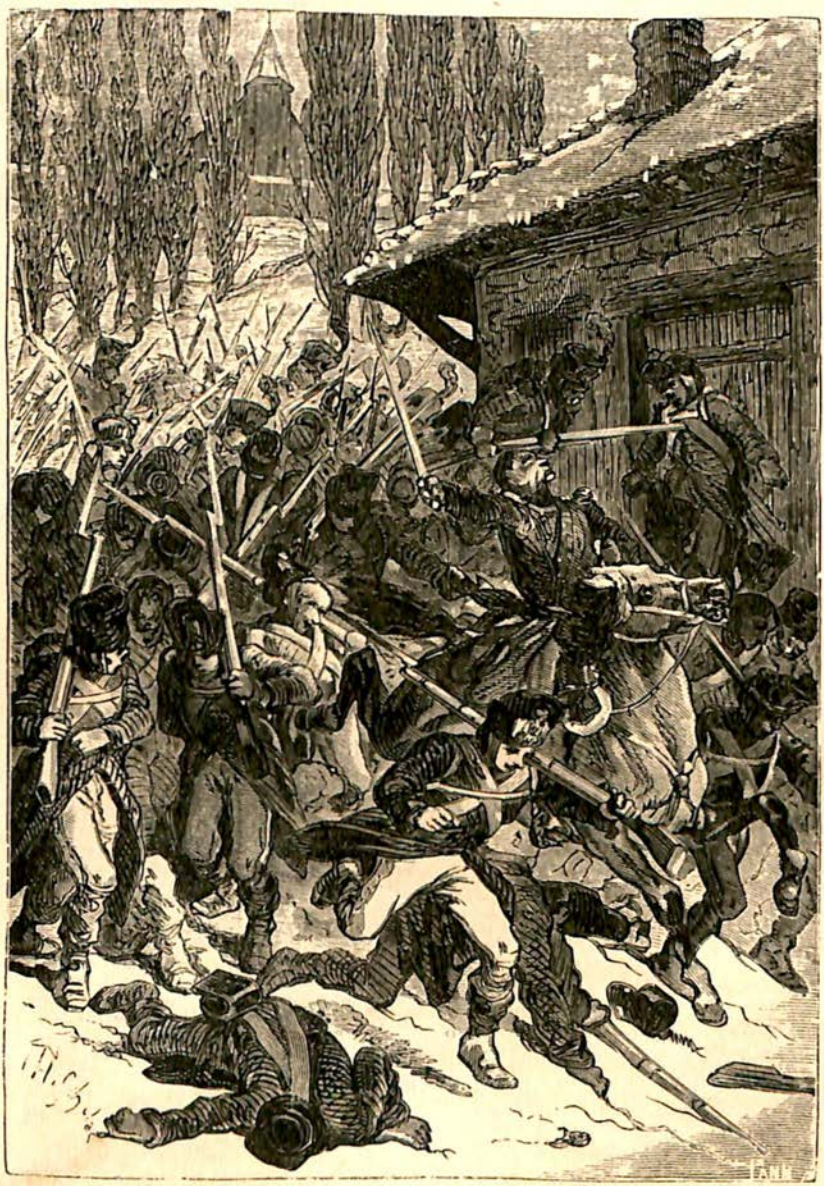
shelves, and the busts of Æsculapius and Hippocrates over the door? When shall I again have my pestle in my hand, and mix my drugs according to the Codex?* When shall I have the happiness of once more sitting in my own arm-chair before a good fire in our shop-parlour, and listening to Heinrich's wooden horse that tries my temper so much? And you, my darling wife, when shall I hear your voice cry out, 'Here is my Heinrich crowned with the palms of victory?'"

"These Germans," interrupted the sergeant, "are downright asses. They shall have palms of victory. What a fool of a letter!"

But Sarah and Zeffen were listening with tears in their eyes. They pressed the children in their arms; and when I reflected that Baruch might have been in the same position as this poor man, I was quite overcome by the thought.

Now, Fritz, hear the end: "We are here in an old tuilerie within cannon-shot of the fort. Some bombs are thrown into the town every night by order of the Russian general, Berdriaiw, in the hope of bringing the people to open their gates. It cannot be long first, for they want food. Then we shall be quartered comfortably in the houses till the end of this glorious campaign; and that will soon come, for all the regular troops have passed without meeting with any resistance, and every day brings us news of victories in Champagne. Bonaparte is in full retreat; the field-marshals Blücher and

* Authorised formulæ.



p. 199.

Schwartzenberg have united their forces, and are not more than five or six days' march from Paris."

"How! what—what does he say?" stammered the sergeant, stooping close down to the paper. "Begin that over again." I saw he was as white as a sheet, and his features quivering with rage.

"He says that Blücher and Schwartzenberg are close to Paris."

"Close to Paris!—they close to Paris!—rag-tag!" said he, stuttering. Then he began to laugh with an evil expression of countenance, and said, "Ah, you were going to take Phalsburg, were you? and then going back to your beggarly country crowned with palms of victory! Ha, ha! I gave you your palms of victory!" At the same time he made the movement of stabbing with the bayonet. "One, two, houp!" It made us all shudder to see him. "Ay, Father Moses," said he, sipping his glass, "that is how I pinned that apothecary to the gate of the Tuilerie. He looked queer enough; his eyes were nearly starting out of his head. His Aurelia will have to wait long enough for him. But go on; only let me tell you, Madame Sarah, that it is all a lie; you must not believe a word he says; the Emperor will show them a trick, never fear."

I had no wish to go on; I felt cold under my tongue, and I hastened to the end, skipping the greater part, which said nothing new, only compliments to friends and acquaintances. The sergeant had enough of it too, and went out, saying, "Good-night; throw that in the fire."

Then I put the letter on one side, and we sat looking at each other in silence for some minutes. I opened the door; the sergeant was in his room at the end of the passage, and I said in a low voice, "It is horrible! A man like that not only kills a father as he would a fly, but he laughs at it afterwards."

"Yes," replied Sarah, "yet he is not wicked; he loves the Emperor too well, that's all."

What was in the letter set us all meditating, and I woke more than once in the night, thinking of this dreadful war, and asking what would become of the country if Napoleon lost the upper hand. But these things were beyond me, and I knew not how to reply to myself.

XVII.

FAMINE AND FEVER.

FROM the time of the landwehr's history, we had a dread of the sergeant, but he did not perceive it, and came regularly to take his little glass of kirschenwasser. Sometimes of an evening he would raise the bottle to the lamp, and say, "It is getting low, Father Moses; it is getting low; we shall soon be on half ration, then quarter, and so on. Never mind; as long as there is a drop, or only the smell in six months' time, Trubert will be satisfied." He laughed, but I used to grow angry as I thought, "You may well content yourself with only a drop! You soldiers want for nothing. The magazines are bomb-proof, the ovens of the bakery are heated every day, and every soldier has his allowance of fresh meat; whilst honest citizens are glad to get potatoes and salt meat." That is what I said to myself when I was in a bad humour, carrying a fair face all the time, however, because of his terrible temper. And it was true enough, Fritz; our own children had nothing

to eat but potato-soup and salt beef, which last produces so many dangerous diseases.

The garrison wanted for nothing; all the same, the Governor constantly gave orders to declare what we had, saying that the domiciliary visits were going to begin again, and those who should be found guilty of concealing anything would be judged with all the rigour of martial law. They wanted everything for themselves; but we did not listen to them, every one hid what he could. He was a lucky fellow then who had managed to keep a cow, and some hay and straw in his cellar. The butter and milk were an exorbitant price. Lucky was he who had a few fowls; a new-laid egg was worth fifteen sous at the end of February, and they could not be got even for that. As for meat, it got dearer every hour, and we did not ask whether it was beef or horse.

The council had sent all the poor out of the town before the blockade; but there remained many indigent. Some of these got into the ditches in the night, to dig out some roots from under the snow, or to cut the nettles that grew out of the bastions to use instead of spinach. The sentries fired on them; but what will not men risk to get a bit of food? It is better to get shot than to die of hunger.

You could see the approach of famine as you beheld the miserable-looking creatures, the women dragging themselves along under the walls, and the wretched children; and you could not help saying to yourself, "If the Emperor does not come to our deliverance, in

another month we shall be like them. What will be the use of money when a radish is worth a hundred francs?" Ah! we did not laugh then, Fritz, when the poor little ones sat round the table eating heartily; we looked at each other, and that was enough.

It is on such occasions that the good management and kind heart of a good woman are seen. Sarah had never spoken to me of provisions; but I knew her prudence, and I thought we must have stores hidden away, though I was not sure of it. So sometimes, when we were all sitting at our poor supper, the fear of seeing the children want would take hold of me, and I would say, "Eat away, enjoy yourselves! I am not hungry. I want an omelette or a fowl. Potatoes will not do for me." I laughed, but Sarah knew what I thought.

"Come, come, Moses," said she to me one day, "do not be afraid to eat; we are not so badly off as you think; and even if it were so, never fear, we should manage. As long as others have got food, we shall not perish." This raised my spirits, and I ate with a good will, for my confidence rested on her.

That same night, when Zeffen and the children were gone to bed, Sarah took the lamp, and led the way to her hiding-place. There were three cellars under the house, all very small and very low, and separated by lattice-work. My wife had piled up some bundles of straw against the last partition, up to the roof; but when the straw was moved away, I saw two sacks of

potatoes, a sack of flour, and, standing on a small barrel of oil, a large piece of beef in salt. We stayed there for an hour, looking and calculating and considering. These provisions were sufficient to take us over a month, and those in the large cellar, which we had shown to the Commissioner, a fortnight: and so Sarah said, as we came up, "You see that we have enough to last us six weeks with good management. Now the dearth only really begins, and if the Emperor does not come before six weeks are over, the place will be surrendered. Meantime we must be contented with salt meat and potatoes."

She was right enough, but I could see day by day how bad this food was for the children, especially David; his large bright eyes, his hollow cheeks, his dejected air, made my heart ache. I often took him in my arms, and caressed him, telling him that as soon as winter was over we should go to Saverne, and that his father should take him out in a carriage. But he would listen to me absently, and put his arm round my neck, and drop his head on my shoulder, without speaking a word. At last he would not eat. Zeffen too lost her spirits; she would often take her child from me, with sobs, declaring that she would go away, that she must see Baruch.

You know nothing of griefs like these, Fritz, the grief a father feels on his children's account, and they are the bitterest of any. No child knows how dearly his parents love him, or how they suffer to see him suffer.

But what could we do? Many, many families in France were worse off than we were.

While these things were passing at home, the patrols and the bombs, the requisitions and orders by day, the cries of "Fire!" and the rattle of fire-engines at night, went on as usual; flags of truce came in, reports were spread that our armies were retreating, that the town was to be set on fire! The less people know, the more they invent. It would be a better plan to tell the plain truth, then every one would take courage; for I have always found, even in the greatest misfortune, that the truth was never so terrible as these inventions. The reason why the Republicans defended themselves as they did, was that they knew the state of the case; nothing had been hidden from them, and every one took a personal interest in the affairs of the country. But when people are kept in ignorance of what concerns them, how can they have any confidence? An honest man has nothing to hide, and I say the same of an honest Government.

Well, the bad weather, the cold, the dearth, and the reports of all kinds added to our misery. Those men who had always put a good face on things, such as Burguet, became sad; they had nothing better to say than—"We shall see; we must wait."

The desertions began again, and the deserters were shot. Our brandy trade went on as usual; I had already sold out seven pipes of spirits, all my debts were paid, my shop in the market-place was full of

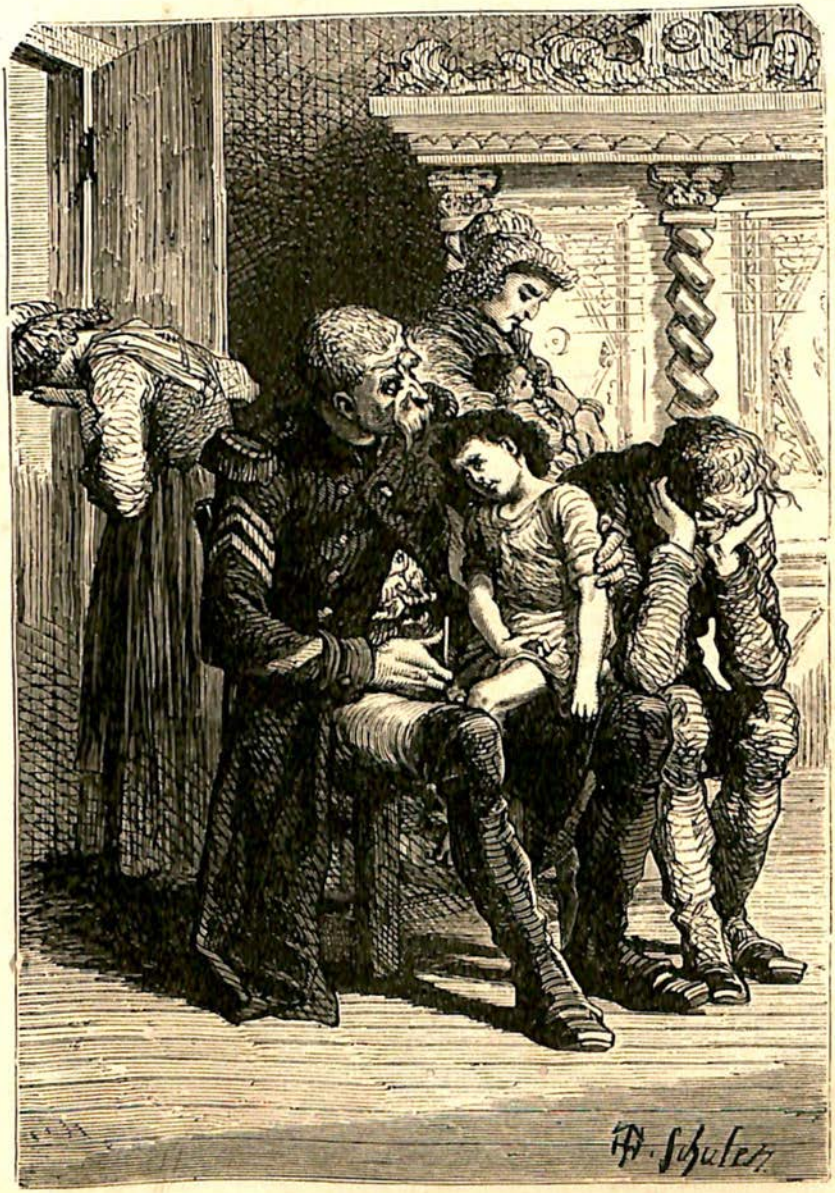
goods, and I had eighteen thousand francs in the cellars; but what is money when we tremble for the lives of those we love?

On the 6th of March, about nine o'clock, we had just supped as usual, and the sergeant, who was sitting near the window, with his legs across, smoking his pipe, had been looking at us without speaking. It was the time when the bombardment generally began, and we heard the first report from behind the Fond de Fiquet; our cannon replied, and that roused us up a little, for we were all silent and thoughtful. "Father Moses," said the sergeant, "the children are very pale."

"I know it, sergeant," said I, sadly.

He said no more; and, as Zeffen left the room to weep, he took David on his knee, and looked at him long. Little Esdras was asleep in Sarah's arms, and Süfel was folding up the table-cloth and the finger-napkins, and putting them away in the cupboard. "Yes," said the sergeant, "we must look to it, Father Moses; I will talk to you about it by-and-by."

I looked at him with surprise; he knocked the ashes out of his pipe, on the edge of the stove, and went out of the room, making me a sign to follow. Zeffen was just coming in, so I took the candle out of her hand, and the sergeant led the way to his little room at the end of the passage. He shut the door, and seating himself at the foot of the bed, said, "Do not alarm yourself, Father Moses, but the typhus has broken out in the town again; five soldiers have gone into hospital



p. 206.

this morning, the commandant of the place, Moulin, is seized, and I have heard of a woman and three children too." He looked full at me; and I felt my blood run cold. "Yes," said he, "I know the typhus; I have known it this many a day; we had it in Poland, in Russia, and in Germany. Bad food is one great cause of it."

I could not help sobbing out, "Oh, sergeant, what can I do? If I could give my life for my children, I would. But what can I do?"

"I will bring you my meat-ticket to-morrow, Father Moses," said the sergeant; "and you must make some broth for the children. Madame Sarah can have the ticket at the market-place, or, if you would rather, I will go for it myself. You shall have all my meat-tickets till the end of the blockade, Father Moses."

When I heard him say that, I was so touched that I took his hand and said, "Sergeant, you are a good man. Forgive me, I thought otherwise."

"Why?" said he, frowning.

"Because of the landwehr at the Tuilerie."

"Oh, that's it. I do not much care; if you knew all the Kaiserlichs I have settled during the last twenty years, you would have a great many more unfavourable thoughts of me. But that is not the question. You accept my offer, Father Moses?"

"And what will you have to eat, sergeant?"

"Never you trouble about me; Sergeant Trubert has never wanted for anything yet." I tried to thank

him, but he stopped me, saying, "Well, then, it is settled. I cannot give you the pike or the fat goose you gave me, but good soup is of some use when a town is blockaded." He laughed, and shook hands. I was quite overcome, and my eyes were full of tears. "Good-night," said he, opening the door; "all will go well. Tell Madame Sarah so."

I blessed this man as I went out, and when I had told Sarah all he had said, she was still more affected than myself. We could not refuse; it was for the children. And for the last week there had been nothing at the butchers' but horse-flesh. The next day, then, we had fresh meat to make soup for the poor little things. But the terrible disease was already in our house. Oh, Fritz, though it is so many years ago, the thought of it makes my heart ache. I have nothing to reproach myself with, however. Before I went for the ticket, I had consulted our old rabbi as to the quality of this meat according to the law, and he answered, "The first law is to save Israel; now, how can Israel be saved if the children perish?"

But in after-time this other law came to my remembrance: "The life of all flesh is in the blood; wherefore I have said unto the children of Israel, Ye shall not eat the blood of any flesh, for the life is in the blood. Whosoever shall eat thereof shall be cut off, and whosoever eateth of a diseased beast shall be unclean."

In my great desolation, these words of the Lord came to my mind, and I wept. All the beasts that had

been put in the ditches of the place had been ill the last six weeks; they were over their hocks in mud, and exposed to the rain and snow. The soldiers, who were mostly the sons of peasants, must have known that they could not live in the open air, in such cold; and it would have been easy to construct some shelter for them. But when the authorities take everything on themselves, the rest forget even the callings they followed in their native village, and if, unfortunately, orders are not given by those in command, nothing is done. That is how it was the animals had scarcely anything on their bones; they were suffering from misery and fever, and their flesh, thus unwholesome, was unclean according to the law of God. The soldiers complained of it. The stench that reached the town from the hundreds of bodies that lay around the Tuilerie and the farm of Ozillo, and in the garden, was another cause of the disease. The justice of the Lord is seen in all things; when the living fail to fulfil their duty to the dead they perish. I remembered these things only when it was too late; that is why it grieves me to think of them now.

XVIII.

DEATH OF LITTLE DAVID.

THIS is how the dreaded disease came to us, Fritz. The 12th of March we heard of many men, women, and children who were dying. It was fearful to listen to, and we said to ourselves, "Nobody is ill in our house; the Lord watches over us." After supper, David came and curled himself up in my arms, with his little hand on my shoulder; he appeared very sleepy, but children are always so at night. Esdras was asleep already, and Sâfel had wished us good-night.

By-and-by Zeffen took the child from me, and we all went to bed. That night the Russians did not fire; perhaps the typhus was among them, too: I cannot say. About midnight, then, we were fast asleep, when I heard a terrible cry. I listened; Sarah said, "It is Zeffen!" I got up directly, and tried to light the lamp; but I was in such agitation I could find nothing. Sarah got a light. I slipped on my clothes, and ran to the door; but I had hardly got into the passage, when Zeffen came out of her room like a mad woman, with

her long black hair all loose, screaming, "The child! the child!" Sarah was close behind me; we went and leaned over the crib. Both of the children appeared to be asleep; Esdras as fresh as a rose, David as white as snow. I was too frightened to see anything at first, but I took David in my arms to wake him; I shook him, calling "David!" And then we saw that his eyes were open and turned in his head. Zeffen screamed, "Oh, wake him! wake him!" Sarah took him from me, and said, "Make a fire, get some water hot." We laid him across the bed, shaking him, and calling him. Esdras began to cry. "Light the fire," said Sarah again to me; "and, Zeffen, be more calm; crying and screaming does no good. Get a fire; quick, quick!" But Zeffen ceased not crying out, "Oh, my poor child!" "He will soon be warm," said Sarah. "Moses, make haste, and dress yourself, and go for Doctor Steinbrenner." She was very pale, and more terrified than either of us, but the brave woman's presence of mind and courage never abandoned her. She had made a fire, and the faggots were crackling on the hearth. Then I ran to put on my great-coat, and went downstairs saying, "O Lord, have mercy upon us! If the child dies, I shall die too; I love him the best! I shall never live after him." For you know, Fritz, that it is always the child that is ill, the child that is in danger, that we love the best; it is he who wants us the most, and we forget the others. The Lord has ordered it thus, for the best, no doubt.

I ran along the street; it was a pitch-dark night, the wind from the Rhine was blowing, and snow as fine as dust flying; the lighted windows here and there showed where the sick lay. I had nothing on my head, but I did not feel the cold. I crossed the Grande Place, where the wind shook the rime from old elms, and just at one o'clock I pushed open the door of Doctor Steinbrenner's house, and the heavy pulley grated in the entrance. As I was feeling my way, a servant appeared at the top of the stairs with a light. "Who is there?" said she, holding up her lantern.

"Oh," I answered, "tell the doctor to come quickly; we have a child ill, very ill." I could not restrain my sobs.

"Come up, Monsieur Moses," said the girl; "my master is just come in, he is not in bed yet. Come up for a minute, and warm yourself."

But Steinbrenner had heard every word.

"I hear, Thérèse," said he, coming out of his room; "keep up the fire, I shall be back in an hour at farthest." He had got on his three-cornered hat and his warm wrapper by this time. We crossed the Place without speaking. I walked first. In a few minutes we reached my house. Sarah had put a candle at the top of the stairs; I took it, and led Doctor Steinbrenner to the room where the child was. Everything was more calm than when I left. Zeffen was sitting in an arm-chair behind the door, with her head bowed to her knees, and her shoulders bare; she no longer screamed,

she was weeping. The child was in the bed, and Sarah standing by the bedside. The doctor put his hat on the drawers. "It is too warm here," he said; "give a little air." Then he came up to the bed. Zeffen had risen to her feet, pale as death. The doctor took the lamp and looked at our poor little David; he raised the bedclothes and listened to his breathing. Esdras then began to cry; he turned round, and said, "Take the other child out of the room; we must have quietness; and, besides, the air of a sick-room is not good for such little children." He gave me a look, and I understood him. It was the typhus! I glanced at my wife—she understood too. Oh, at that moment, I thought my heart would break; I dared not even groan, for Zeffen was leaning over behind us, so I said nothing, nor did Sarah either.

When the doctor asked for some paper to write his prescription, we went out together. I took him into our room, and when the door was shut, I began to sob and cry. He said to me, "Be a man, Moses, do not cry. Remember that you have to keep up the courage of two poor women. I asked him in a very low voice, for fear of being heard, if there was any hope. "It is typhus," said he; "I will do all I can. Here is the prescription; take it to Tribolin, his assistant sits up all night now. Be as quick as you can. And, in the name of Heaven, get the other child out of the room, and your daughter, too, if you can. Try to get somebody that is used to the sick; the typhus is catching." I did not say a word. He took up his hat and went away.

What more shall I say? The typhus is a disease bred of death itself; of it the prophet spoke when he cried, "The sepulchre is moved because of thee, the grave hath gone out to meet thee." How many have I seen die of typhus, in our hospitals, on the hill-side at Saverne, and elsewhere! When men destroy each other without pity, why should not Death come and lend them a hand? But what had this poor child done, that he should die so soon? It is dreadful to think of, Fritz, but it is most true, that the many must ever suffer for the crimes of the few. Yes, when I reflect that my child died of this pest, which war had brought with it from the depths of Russia to us, and which ravaged all Alsace and Lorraine for six months, I do not lay it to the Lord, as the impious do; I lay it to the crime of man. Has not God given him reason? And when he abuses it, and allows his passions to be excited against his fellow-creatures by a few discontented spirits, is God the cause? But we cannot reason justly when we are in the depth of suffering.

The sickness lasted six days, and those days were the bitterest of all my life. I was in dread on account of my wife, my daughter, Sâfel, and Esdras. I took my place in a corner, listening to the child's breathing. Sometimes I thought it stopped; then a cold chill passed over me, and I drew nearer to hear. And if, by any chance, Zeffen made her way in, in spite of the doctor's orders, I grew excited, and pushed her out by the shoulders, with a shudder. She cried, "It is my child!

it is my child!" I answered, "You are my child, too! You shall not both die!" Then I melted into tears, and sank down exhausted and overcome with grief.

Sarah went and came with lips compressed; she did everything, thought of everything. At that time, musk was the favourite remedy for the typhus, and the house was full of it. Sometimes I fancied Esdras was sickening. Ah! if the greatest happiness in this world is to have children, what grief is equal to that of seeing them suffer! How terrible to lose them! to stand by and listen to their struggling breath, their delirious words, to see them waste away hour by hour, and to find in the depths of your soul no words but these: "Death draws nigh; there is nothing more to be done; nothing can save thee, my child; I may not give my own life for thine; death will not take me in thy stead." What sorrows, what anguish, till the last moment, when all is silent. Oh, Fritz, blockade, money, famine, the general misery, were all alike forgotten; I scarcely noticed the sergeant as he opened the door every morning, and put his head in to say, "Well, Father Moses, how is he?" I did not know what he said, I took no notice. But what I still remember with satisfaction, and what I shall always be proud of, is, that in the midst of all this, when Sarah, and Zeffen, and I, lost our presence of mind, forgot all about trade, and let things go their own way, Sâfel took upon him the management of the business. We heard him get up at six o'clock every morning, go down, open the shop, and bring up one or two pitchers

of brandy for the early customers. Nobody had told him to do it; but Sâfel's whole soul was in trade. If anything could console a father in the midst of so much misery, it would be to see himself over again, as one may say, in so young a child; and to think, "The good old race is not extinct, there will always be some left to set an example of common sense to the world!" Yes, it is the greatest consolation such a man can have.

Our Schabbès-Goïe did the cooking, and old Dame Lanche sat up in turn with us; but Sâfel alone did all the business. His mother and I thought of only David. He died in the night of the 18th of March, the day when the fire broke out at Captain Cabanier's. That same night two bombs had fallen upon our house, but the blindage sent them rolling into the court, where they both burst. All the windows of the wash-house were broken, the door of the wood-house dashed in, and the stacks thrown down with a great crash. It was the heaviest bombardment which the town suffered during that blockade: for as soon as the enemy saw the flames, they directed their fire from Mittelbronn, the Baraques, and from the height of Fond de Fiquet, to the point, to try to prevent the people from putting them out.

I stayed all the time, with Sarah, by the child's bedside. We paid little attention to the bombs. The truly miserable care little for life; and besides the child was so bad. His body was covered with blue patches. The end was drawing nigh.

I was walking up and down the room, when the cry of "Fire! fire!" was raised in the street. People were rushing up and down. We heard those who came from the fire talking about it, the engines tearing past, the soldiers forming the chain,* and the bombs bursting right and left. From our windows we could see tongues of flame that rose from the opposite quarter. Our cannon replied to the enemy in every direction, and every now and then we heard a cry of "Make room there! make room!" It was for the wounded, that were carried past. The picket came up to our room, to make me take my place in the chain; but when they saw Sarah and me sitting by the child, they went away.

The first bomb fell on our house at eleven, the second at four in the morning. Everything shook, from the loft to the cellar; the floor, the bed, the furniture, all moved; but, in our prostration and despair, we did not say one word.

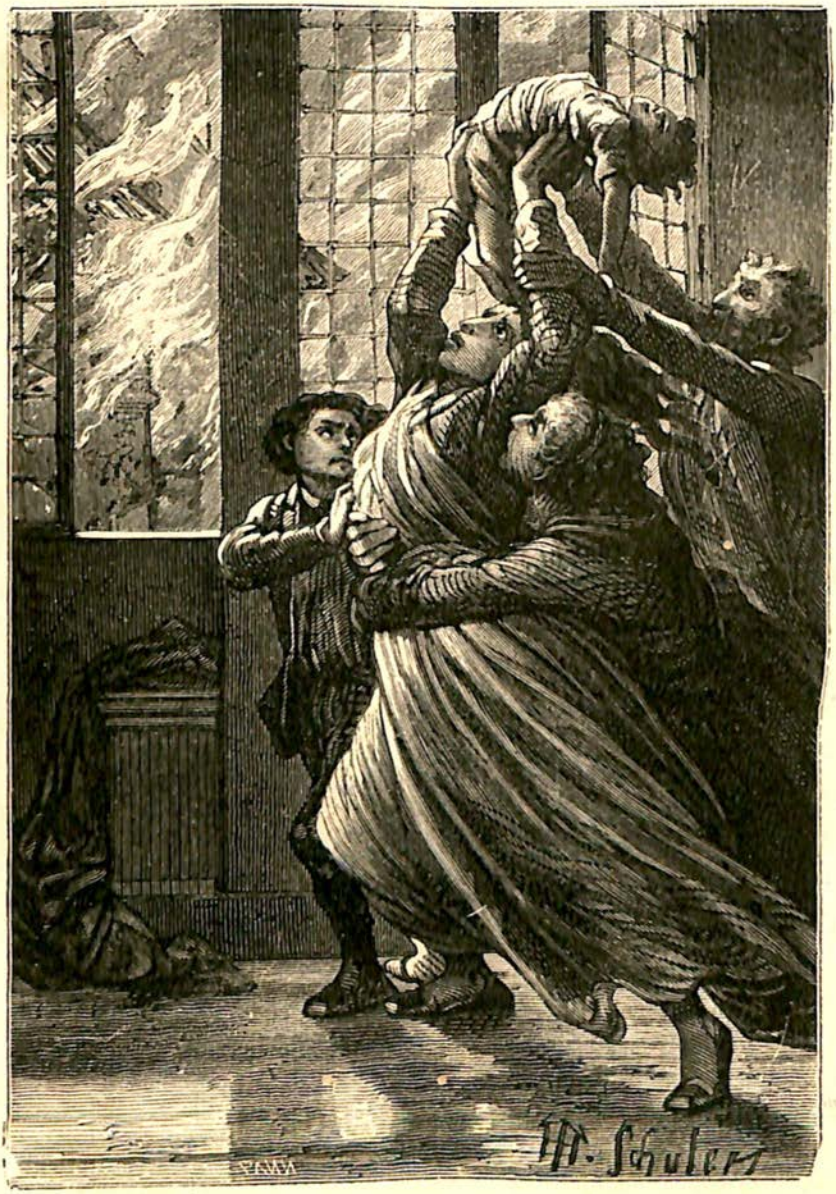
Zeffen came in with Esdras and Sâfel when the first bomb fell. They saw that David was dying. The nurse and Sarah were sitting down in tears, and Zeffen began to wail. I opened the windows quite wide, to let in some air, and the room was instantly full of gunpowder-smoke. Sâfel saw directly that the time was come. I had only to look at him; he went out, and soon returned, in spite of the crowd, by a by-street, bringing with him the chanter Kalmès, who began to intone the prayer for the

* *Le chaine.* Even now, when a fire bursts out in Paris, the passers-by are forced to form a line to hand the buckets of water.

dying:—"The Lord reigns; the Lord hath reigned; the Lord shall reign for ever! Praised be the name of the Lord, and His reign glorious for ever. The Lord, He is God! The Lord, He is God! The Lord, He is God! Attend, O Israel! The Lord our God is one God. Go, then, whither the Lord calleth thee. Go, and His mercy be with thee. May the Lord our God be with thee; may the angels bear thee to heaven; may the just rejoice when the Lord shall take thee to His bosom! Most merciful God, receive this soul to joy eternal." Sarah and I repeated the sacred words in tears. Zeffen, like one dead, was lying with stretched-out arms across the bed at her child's feet. Her brother Sâfel stood behind, crying bitterly, and calling her softly, "Zeffen! Zeffen!" But she did not hear; her soul was drowned in speechless sorrow.

In the street, the cries of "Fire!" the orders of the firemen, the noise of the crowd, and the roar of the cannonade, continued; flash after flash lit up the darkness. What a night, Fritz!

Suddenly Sâfel stooped down to look under the curtain, and drew back with a look of terror. My wife and I came, and we saw the child's last breath. We burst into sobs; the chanter ceased the psalm. Our David was dead. Most terrible was the mother's cry. She had been lying as in a faint; but when the chanter, stooping down, shut the book and said, "Amen," she arose, took the child in her arms, and gazed at him; then raising him above her head, she rushed towards the



p. 219.

door, crying in a harrowing voice, "Baruch, Baruch, save our child!"

She had lost her senses, Fritz. I stopped her, and took the little corpse from her by force that she was trying to carry away. Sarah wound her arms round her, and the nurse, the chanter, and Sâfel got her out of the room. I remained alone, and I heard people taking my daughter downstairs.

How does man bear such great sorrow? I put David in the bed and covered him over, because the windows were open. I knew he was dead, but it seemed to me he would feel the cold. I looked on him long without weeping, that I might keep the memory of his sweet face in my heart for ever. How was that heart torn! I felt as if my life were going from me; and, in my madness, I accused the Almighty. I said, "I am he who hath seen affliction by reason of Thy fury. Surely Thou hast turned Thyself against me. Thou hast caused my flesh to wither, and Thou hast broken my bones. Thou hast thrust me into the darkness. When I cry unto Thee, Thou rejectest my prayers. Thou art like unto a lion that abideth in his den."

I walked up and down, groaning and blaspheming, but the God of mercy has pardoned me. He knew it was not I, but my despair that spoke. I sat down after a while. The others came back. Sarah sat down by me in silence, and Sâfel said, "Zeffen and Esdras are at the rabbi's." I covered my head, and did not answer him.

When the old nurse Lanche and some other women came in, I took Sarah by the hand, and we went into the large room without speaking. The sight of this room, where the two little brothers had so often played, made me shed another flood of tears; and Sarah and Sâfel wept with me.

The house was full of people. It was not more than eight o'clock, and it was already known that our child was dead.

XIX.

THE PASSOVER.

THE preparations for the funeral began immediately, Fritz. All who died of typhus were buried the same day; the Christians behind the church, and the Jews in the ditch of the place where the riding-school is now. Some old women were already busy washing the corpse, combing the hair, and cutting the nails, according to the law of God; and others were sewing at the shroud.

The open windows admitted the air, and the shutters kept flapping against the wall. The "schamess" * went through the streets, knocking at the doors of our people with his hammer to assemble them together. Sarah was seated on the ground with her head veiled. I heard Desmarets coming up, and roused my courage to go and meet him, and to show him the room. The little angel was laid on the floor in his shirt, with a bundle of straw under his head, and the "thaleth" in his hands. He was as beautiful as ever once more, with

* Beadle.

his brown curls and lips half open. I could not help thinking as I looked, "The Lord desired to have thee near to His throne." And my tears fell in silence—my beard was wet with them. Desmarets took the measure, and went away. Half-an-hour afterwards he came back, with the little deal coffin under his arm, and the house was again full of groans and sighs. I could not bear to see the child screwed down. I went and sat on the sack of ashes, and covered my face with my hands, saying, with Jacob, "Surely I shall go down with him to the grave."

Very few of our people came, for terror reigned in the town. They knew that the angel of death was passing over it, and that his sword dropped blood. Each one poured his vessel of water on the threshold, and then hastened away. A few of the best came, however, in silence, and towards evening we took our way to the postern.

None of the family were there but myself. Sarah and Zeffen were unable to follow. I cast in the shovelful of earth; my strength gave way, and they were obliged to help me home. The sergeant had hold of my arm, and kept speaking to me, but I did not hear: I was as one dead. The only other thing I remember of that dreadful day is, that when I was sitting barefoot on the sack before our cold and desolate hearth, my head bowed down and my soul steeped in wretchedness, the "schamess" drew near, touched me on the shoulder, and made me get up; and then, taking a knife out of

his pocket, he rent my coat down to the hip. This was the most terrible stroke, and the last. I fell down, murmuring with Job, "Let the day perish wherein I was born, and the night wherein it was said, A man-child is conceived."

My grief, Fritz, knew no bounds; I cried out, "What shall I say unto Baruch when he shall ask his child of me?" I took no interest in business. Zeffen lived at the rabbi's, and her mother went every day to comfort her and to take care of Esdras.

The house stood wide open; the Schabbès-Goïe burned sugar and spices, and the winds of heaven entered, purifying the air. Sâfel sold in the shop. In the morning, I used to roast a few potatoes in the ashes, and eat them with a little salt, and then go away, forgetful of everything. I went sometimes to the right, sometimes to the left, sometimes round the ramparts, to the large streets. I could not bear the sight of people, especially of those who knew the child.

At that time, Fritz, the misery in the town was great; hunger and cold, and all kinds of suffering were there; and the pinched and shrunken faces of half-naked women and children were seen in the lanes and alleys, at every turn. Such wretchedness will never be seen again; we shall have no more wars of twenty years' duration, while the highways were but wheel-ruts, and the roads like rivers of mud, while the land lay fallow for want of hands to cultivate it, and the houses went to ruin for want of inhabitants; when the poor

went barefoot, and the rich wore sabots,* while the superior officers rode past them mounted on splendid horses, and full of contempt for the whole human race. That would not be borne now. But then, everything in the country was turned upside down, and abused; the citizens and the people went for nothing—force was all in all. When any one said, "There is, however, such a thing as justice, right, and truth," it was the fashion to answer, "I do not know." And that man passed for a clever fellow who could make his way. In the time of my great grief, I saw these things without taking notice of them, and they and many others have come to my memory since, and those who are as old as I am remember them too.

One morning, I was in the Old Market-place, looking at the poor creatures that came to buy meat. At that time, they were slaughtering the horses of the gendarmes; they were as lean as the cattle in the ditches, but that meat was sold at a high price. I looked, I say, at the crowds of haggard, wan old women and of hollow-eyed men that pressed round Franz Sepel's stall, to get pieces of the carcase. Franz's great dogs were no longer to be seen hanging about, licking their chops; but old women, stretching out their long lean arms to catch at the morsels; while their feeble voices cried in a beseeching tone, "Give a bit more of the liver, good Mr. Franz."

All this passed under the great dark roofing of the

* Wooden shoes.

p. 224.

Market-place, pierced as it was by the shells; and, in the distance, leaning against the mouldy pillars of the guard-house, some soldiers, with their old great-coats clinging to their hips, looked on too. It was like a dream. This spectacle accorded well with my deep sadness. I had been contemplating it about half-an-hour, when, just as I was going away, I saw Burguet approach, keeping under the shop of Father Bramstein, which had been shattered by the bombs, and leaned, ready to fall into the lane. Burguet had told me, a few days before our misfortune, that his servant was ill; I had forgotten it, but when I saw him I remembered. He was as much changed as though years had passed since I saw him last; his face was thin, his cheeks wrinkled, his hat drawn over his eyes, his beard of a fortnight's growth, and grizzled. He came along, peeping cautiously around, but he could not see me, standing as I was, in the shadow, against the old granary; he took his place behind the crowd of old women, and awaited his turn. After a few minutes he placed a few sous in Franz Sepel's hand, and received a morsel in exchange, which he hastened to hide under his coat. Then, looking once more all round, he went away quickly, with his head hanging down.

This sight made my heart ache; I went away, with my hands raised to heaven, and murmuring, "Can it be, can it be? Burguet! a man of his abilities, brought to suffer hunger, and to eat of these carcases. God of heaven, what a trial!" I went home quite overcome.

We had not many provisions left, but all the same, the next morning, when Sâfel went downstairs to open the shop, I said to him, "Here, my child, take this basket to Mr. Burguet; it contains potatoes, and a piece of salt beef. Take care it is not seen, or you will be robbed of it. Tell him it is sent for the poor deserter's sake." The boy went; and he told me Burguet shed tears on receiving it. This is what is to be seen, Fritz, during a blockade, and there is some new horror every day. This is what the Germans and Spaniards had suffered, and what we suffered in our turn. Such is war!

The provisions of the garrison itself were well-nigh exhausted; the commandant of the place, Moulin, had died of typhus, but the famine did not prevent the lieutenant-colonel, who succeeded him, from giving balls and entertainments to the bearers of the flags of truce, in the old "Hôtel Thevenot." The windows were brilliantly lighted, the music played, and the officers of the staff drank wine and punch, to make it appear that we had plenty of everything. They were right to blindfold the visitors till they got into the ball-room; for if they had seen how the people looked, all the wine and all the bowls of punch in the world would not have deceived them.

At this time, the gravedigger, Mouyot, and his two sons, used to come every morning to take their dram of brandy. They might have called it "drinking the dead," as the old soldiers called it "drinking the Cossacks." Nobody in the town would take upon them

to bury those who died of the typhus; they only, after having swallowed the brandy, had dared to throw the bodies from the hospital on a truck, and cast them, one upon the other, into the pits. Orders were given to wrap each corpse in a sheet, but whose duty was it to see that it was done? Mouyot told me himself, that they buried them in their coats, or waistcoats, just as it happened, and sometimes quite naked. They received thirty-five sous for every one. Mouyot, who is now blind, can tell you that was the day of his prosperity.

At the end of March, in the midst of the famine, not a dog, much less a cat, was to be found in the streets; bad news was reported in the town; reports of battles lost, of marches towards Paris, ran to and fro among us.

Through receiving officers, and giving balls, something of our misery got known, either by means of the men-servants or the maids. I often wandered through the streets near the ramparts, and sometimes I ascended one of the bastions, that which looked towards Strasburg, or else that towards Metz or Paris; I did not care for a spent ball then. Thence I could see the hundreds of bivouac fires scattered over the plain, and the enemy's soldiers, coming in from the villages, with long poles on their shoulders, from which hung whole quarters of meat. I could see them sitting round these fires, that sparkled along the outskirts of the wood; their patrols, their covered batteries, with their flag floating over them. Sometimes I fixed my eyes on the smoke, as it rose from the chimneys of Quatre-Vents, Biegelberg,

and Mittelbronn. There was no smoke in our chimneys; the days of our feasting were over.

You cannot imagine what things come into your head, when you are shut up in a town; how you look at the broad white roads till you fancy you are walking there, talking over the news, asking the folks what they have suffered, and telling them what you have had to bear yourself.

From the bastion of the bakery, I could see the white peaks of the Schneeberg: I was among the foresters, the tree-fellers, and the charcoal-burners. We had heard a report that they were defending the road to Schirmeck; I should have liked to know if it was true. When I looked in the direction of Maison-Rouge, on the Paris road, I fancied I was at my old friend Leiser's; I could see him standing by his kitchen fire, wild at having to feed so many people; for the staff-officers, Russians, Austrians, and Bavarians, all took that road, and new regiments went by continually.

Spring came at last. The snow began to melt in the furrows, and behind the hedges; and the great forests of Bonne-Fontaine and Baraques began to look green. I remember that what most affected me was the singing of the first lark. I looked after it into the pale sky; the thought of David came over me, and without knowing wherefore, I wept. Men are strangely constituted; the song of a bird can melt them, and sometimes, after long years, the same sounds bring back the same memories, and they are moved to tears.

Our house was now purified, and Zeffen and Sarah returned to it. The Passover was drawing near, and it was necessary to wash the floors, cleanse the walls, and scour all the household utensils. The poor women forgot their grief a little in these occupations. But as the time approached, we became very uneasy. How were we to fulfil the commandment of God, in the midst of the famine? "This month shall be the first of the year unto you. On the tenth day of this month, every family shall take a lamb from among the sheep, or a kid from among the goats. They shall keep it until the fourteenth day, and ye shall kill it in the evening; and ye shall eat its flesh, roast, with unleavened bread, and with bitter herbs." Where was the lamb to be found for the sacrifice? Schmoulé, the old "schmess," had provided it three months ago; he had kept a male kid of the year in his cellar, to this end; and it was this kid that was killed. Every Jewish family had their share of it—a small portion it was; but the will of the Lord was accomplished.

We invited on that day, according to the law, one of the poorest of our brethren, Kalmès. We set out together for the synagogue, where prayers were recited, and returned to take our seats at the table. All was ready and as it should be, in spite of the general misery; the fair white cloth, the vessel of vinegar, the hard egg, the horse-radish, the unleavened bread, the kid's flesh. The seven-branched lamp was lighted; the only thing was, that we had but little bread.

When I was seated, Sâfel took the ewer and poured water on my hands; then we all bent down our heads, and each taking the bread in his hand, repeated, "This is the bread of affliction which our fathers did eat in the land of Egypt. Let him that is a-hungered come and eat it with thee. Let him that is poor keep the Passover." We then sat down again, and Sâfel said, "What is the meaning of this ceremony, father?"

I answered, "We were slaves in the land of Egypt, my child, and the Lord delivered us with a mighty hand and with a stretched-out arm." These words filled us with courage; we hoped that the Lord would deliver us, even as He had delivered our fathers—that the Emperor would be His right arm. But we were wrong: the Lord would none of that man!

XX.

PEACE.

THE next morning, when we were fast asleep, between six and seven, just as it was getting light, a cannon-shot made all our window-panes rattle. The enemy generally fired in the night. I listened; another report soon followed the first, then another and another. I got up, opened one of our windows, and looked out. The sun was getting up behind the arsenal; not a soul was in the streets, but as the reports continued, doors and windows opened, and men, still in their shirts, looked out and listened. No bomb hissed through the air: the enemy were firing powder. Upon listening attentively, a confused noise could be heard at a distance. It came first from the ascent of Mittelbronn, then it reached Biegelberg, the Quatre-Vents, and the Baraques. Sarah had got up too. I finished dressing myself, and said to her, "There is something extraordinary going on. God grant it may be for our good."

I went down in an uneasy state of mind. It was

not more than a quarter of an hour since the first gun had been fired, and all the town was afoot. Some ran to the ramparts, others were quarrelling and brawling at every corner. Surprise, fear, and anger were painted on every face. A great many soldiers mixed with the townspeople, and all made their way either to the right or the left of the French Gate. I was going to follow them, when Burguet came down the street. He was looking just the same as when I saw him in the Old Market-place. "Well, well," said I, running up to him, "this is a serious business."

"A very serious business, Moses," said he, "and which forebodes no good."

"Yes, that is clear," said I; "the allies have been victorious; they are perhaps now at Paris."

He looked round with alarm. "Take care, Moses," said he, "take care; if the old soldiers were to hear what you say, they would be ready to tear you to pieces."

I was frightened, for I perceived he was right; as for him, he was quite agitated. After a moment he took my arm, and said, "I owe you thanks for the provisions you sent me; they came in the time of need."

When I told him he should have a bit of bread while ours lasted, he squeezed my hand; and we went up the street of the infantry barracks to the bastion of the Glacière, where the battery commanded the hill of Mittelbronn. Thence you could see the road to Paris, as far as Petit-Saint-Jean, and even to Lixheim; but

the great mounds of earth they called cavaliers were covered with people. The Baron Parmentier, his adjoint* Pipelingre, the old curé Leth, and many other notables, kept their place there in the midst of the crowd, looking on in silence. Only to see their faces, told you that something terrible was passing.

When we got on the talus we saw what fixed their attention. The enemy—Austrians, Bavarians, Würtembergers, and Russians—cavalry and infantry, were swarming all together round the intrenchments, like so many ants; kissing and embracing each other, shaking hands, twirling their shakos on the point of their bayonets, and waving branches of trees in the air. Horsemen were dashing across the plain with fur-caps on their sword-points, and shouting to rend the sky. The semaphore was at work on the hill of Saint-Jean, and Burguet said, as he pointed it out to me, "If we could understand those signals, Moses, we should know better what is coming to pass before this day fortnight."

Some people having turned round to listen to our conversation, we came down through the Rue de Quartier in deep meditation. The soldiers were looking out from the upper windows of the barracks, and crowds of men and women were running towards the ramparts. We made our way through them, and when we got to the Rue des Capucins, which is always deserted, Burguet, whose head hung down, exclaimed, "It is all over, then!

* An assistant which the mayor has the right to choose on his appointment to office.

What things have we seen in the last twenty-five years, Moses! What wonderful, what terrible things! And it is all over." He held my hand, and looked at me, as if frightened at his own words; then resuming his walk, "This winter campaign alarmed me from the first," said he; "it dragged on and on, and the thunderbolt fell not. But to-morrow, or the day after, what shall we hear? Is the Emperor dead? What will they do with us? Will France still be France? What will they take from us? What will they leave us?"

And with these reflections we reached our house. Then Burguet seemed suddenly to recollect himself; and he said to me, "Moses, be prudent! If the Emperor is not dead, the veterans will hold out to the last moment. Remember that those who should give them reason to suspect their loyalty would have everything to fear."

I thanked him for his advice, and went upstairs, firmly resolved to follow it. The potatoes were on the table, and my wife and children were waiting breakfast for me. We sat down, and I related to them in a subdued voice all I had seen from the ramparts, charging them to be silent, for that the danger was not yet over. "The garrison," I said, "may revolt, and insist on defending the place against the orders of their chiefs; and those who should meddle with these things, for or against, would get into trouble, and nobody would be the better." They knew I was right, and there was no need to say any more. We dreaded to see our sergeant

come in, and to be obliged to answer if he asked us what we thought of these events; but he did not return till eleven o'clock at night, and we had all been in bed some time.

The next day, the news of the entrance of the allies into Paris was found stuck on the church door and on the pillars of the Market-place, nobody ever knew by whom. Vablerie and three or four other emigrés* were supposed to be in the business, but it was not certain. The guard tore down these papers, but unfortunately not before the soldiery and the townspeople had read them.

It was something so new, so incredible, after ten years' war, during which the Emperor was all in all, and the nation, as it were, lay in the shade; when a man could neither speak, nor write a word, without due authorisation; when the only right he had was to pay taxes, and give children to the conscription: it seemed such a serious matter to suppose for a moment, that the Emperor had been defeated, that a father, standing in the midst of his family, looked to the right and to the left, before even daring to whisper it to them.

All remained quiet, notwithstanding the placards. The public functionaries kept at home, to avoid being questioned; the Governor and the council of war made no move; as to the new recruits, they thought that they should soon see their native village and their parents again, and resume their trade, or their labour,

* Aristocrats who had fled during the revolution.

and marry when it seemed good to them; they could not conceal their joy, and it was very natural. The veterans, whose only trade was war, and who had no other means of living, were furious. They did not believe a word; they vowed all the news was false, that the Emperor had never lost a battle, and never would lose one; and that the placards and the firing were only stratagems of the allies, to induce the town to open its gates to them.

From that day, Fritz, the desertions were numerous; not one, but six, ten, twenty at a time. Whole posts decamped with their arms and baggage. The veterans fired on the deserters, and killed a few, and orders were given to them to escort the conscripts whose duty it was to carry the soup to the outposts.

There were constant parleys, Russian officers, Austrians, and Bavarians, one after the other; and they passed hours together at head-quarters, having, doubtless, serious propositions to discuss. The sergeant never stayed more than a minute or so in our room, just to complain of the desertions; and we were glad he did not; Zeffen was still ill; Sarah could not leave her; and I was obliged to help Sâfel till after the retreat.

The shop was always full of veterans; as soon as one set went out, another came in. These grey-headed old fellows swallowed glass after glass, treating each other all round; and it seemed to make them only more melancholy. They talked among themselves of treason,

looking at you out of the corner of their eye. Sometimes they would say, with a smile, "Look out! If the fortress must be blown up, we will blow it up." Sâfel and I looked as if we did not understand; but you may fancy our state of mind, to think, after suffering so much, that we stood a chance of being blown up in company with the veterans.

When the sergeant came in at night, he repeated what the rest said, word for word. It was all treason and lies; the Emperor would not be long before he made an end of that rabble. "Just wait a bit," said he, with his pipe between his teeth: "the rout will soon begin. The stroke is ready to fall, and this time without pity or mercy. There must be none spared. The country must be rid of the wretches for a hundred years to come. You will see, Moses, it will be our turn to laugh."

You may fancy, we did not feel much inclined to laugh then. But the day when I was the most frightened, was the 8th of April; the morning when the decree of the Senate came, which announced the deposition of the Emperor. Our shop was full of gunners, of marines, and non-commissioned officers. We had just served them, when the treasurer's secretary, a short, fat little fellow, with a round face, and his cap on one side, came in, and called for a glass; then he took the decree out of his pocket, and began to read it very leisurely to the rest.

"Listen to this," said he—I think I hear him still—

"'Whereas, Napoleon Bonaparte has violated his engagement with the people of France, by raising taxes otherwise than by the authority of the law, by needlessly adjourning the sittings of the Legislative Assembly, by illegally publishing various decrees awarding capital punishment, by destroying ministerial responsibility, judicial independence, and the liberty of the press: Whereas, Napoleon has aggravated the misfortunes of the country, by the abuse he has made of all the means, whether money or men, for carrying on the war, in that he has refused to hear any conditions, which, in the national interest, he should have accepted: Whereas, the manifest desire of all France is a return to order, whose first result shall be a general peace, which shall ratify a solemn reconciliation between all the estates of the great European family: the Senate decrees Napoleon Bonaparte to have forfeited the throne; the hereditary succession is abolished in his family, the people and the army are absolved from their oath of allegiance to him.'"

When he began to read, I thought to myself, "If he goes on with it, they will pull my shop down." I even sent Sâfel out by the back-door, in my terror. But it turned out very differently from what I expected. These veterans had the greatest contempt for the Senate; they only shrugged their shoulders, and he who had read the decree wiped his nose with it, and threw it under the counter, saying, "The Senate, indeed! What is the Senate? A set of sponging rascals that the Emperor

has picked up, right and left, to be ready at all times to say, 'God bless you!'"

"Ay, major," said another; "but, all the same, they ought to be kicked out."

"Oh, it is not worth while," replied the sergeant-major; "before another fortnight is over, when the Emperor has once more the upper hand, they will be ready to lick the dust off his feet. It looks well for a dynasty to have men ready to lick the dust off your feet, especially when they are ancient nobles, who are paid thirty or forty thousand francs a year for it. They will all come back, never fear, and the Emperor will pardon them, all the more readily, because there are no others equally noble that could be put in their place."

And when they went out, after having emptied their glasses, I thanked God for giving them such confidence in their Emperor. That confidence lasted till the 11th or 12th of April, when the officers who were sent by the general commanding the 4th division, reported that the garrison of Metz recognized the authority of the Senate, and obeyed its orders. This was a terrible blow for our veterans. We could see by the face of our sergeant, that very night, that it was a death-stroke for him. He looked ten years older, and the expression of his countenance was enough to make you shed tears. Up to that time, he had always said, "All these decrees, all these placards, are so many acts of treason. The Emperor is there, at the head of his army, and we are here to maintain him. Fear nothing, Moses." But

from the time of the arrival of the officers from Metz, his confidence was gone. He was very pale when he came into our room, and he remained standing looking at us.

I thought, "This man likes us, and has done us good. He would have given us his meat as long as the blockade lasted, and he loved our David, and used to take him on his knee. He loves Esdras, too. He is a good fellow, yet he is very unhappy." I would have tried to console him, by telling him that he was not without friends, that we all loved him, and would make any sacrifice to help him, if he were forced to change his condition. Yes, these were my thoughts; but when I looked at him, his grief appeared so terrible, that I could not find a word to say. He took two or three turns, stopping every now and then; but suddenly he left the room. His grief was so great that he could not even complain.

Well, at last, on the 16th of April, an armistice was concluded, to bury the dead. The bridge was lowered at the German Gate, and many went out and stayed till the evening to dig a little in their gardens, and to try to find a little green food. But Zeffen was still ill, so we all remained at home.

At nightfall, just as they were raising the bridge, two other officers came in from Metz to parley. They went through the street at a gallop to head-quarters. I saw them pass. The coming of these officers had awakened both hope and fear everywhere, and something decisive was expected. We heard the sergeant moving about

his room all night, getting up, walking about, lying down again, and talking to himself. The poor fellow felt that a dreadful blow was coming: he could not rest for a moment. I pitied him as I listened to him, for his sighs prevented me from sleeping.

The next day, at ten o'clock, the rappel was beat. The Governor and the members of the council of war, in full uniform, went to the infantry quarters. Every one was at their windows. Our sergeant went down, and followed him in a minute or two. The street was thronged with people, and I made my way through the [illegible] with difficulty, for nobody liked to give way. When I reached the barracks, I saw the companies formed in a circle; the quarter-masters in the midst were reading the order of the day to the army; it was the Emperor's abdication, the disbanding of the recruits of 1813 and 1814, the acknowledgment of Louis XVIII., and the order to hoist the white flag, and to change the cockade.

Not a sound was to be heard through the ranks; everything was calm—dreadfully calm. Those old soldiers, with close-shut teeth, trembling lips, and frowning brows, presented arms in silence; the quarter-masters stopped from time to time, as if the words they were reading choked them, the officers of the staff kept at a distance, under the entrance to the barracks, with melancholy and cast-down looks, and the crowd of men, women, and children, from one end of the street to the other, stood motionless, but listening eagerly, with

mouths half open, and eyes fixed on the ground. The whole scene, Fritz, was one to make you shudder. I was on the steps of Schweyer the cooper's house, and I could see everything and hear every word. While the order of the day was being read, none moved; but at the word of command, "Break the ranks!" a terrible cry broke forth—all was tumult, confusion, and fury. Whole files of conscripts rushed to the barracks; but the old soldiers stood for a moment, as if rooted to the spot; then, as if possessed by sudden rage, one tore off his epaulettes, another dashed his musket to pieces on the stones, and some of the officers broke their swords. The Governor tried to make himself heard and to form the ranks, but to no purpose; the new recruits were already busy tying up their bundles ready for the journey home, and the old men went, some to the right, some to the left, like drunkards and madmen. I saw some of these old soldiers leaning their heads against the wall, with the tears running down their faces.

As the crowd dispersed, prolonged shouts were heard from the barracks to the Place; they rose and fell like sighs. The cry of "Vive l'Empereur!" alone was raised, not a voice said "Vive le Roi!" I hastened home to tell the news, but had scarcely got upstairs before the sergeant came in, with his musket on his shoulder. We were all delighted that the blockade was ended; but when we saw the sergeant standing in the doorway, our very blood ran cold, and we remained

silent. "Well," said he, dropping the butt-end of his musket on the floor, "it is over." For a moment he did not speak; then he stammered out, "They are the veriest beggars in the world. The recruits are disbanded; they are gone. France lies, bound hand and foot, in the gripe of the Kaiserlichs. Ah, villains! wretches!"

"Yes, sergeant," I replied; "but you must get over it. We shall have peace now, sergeant. You have a sister in the Jura; you must go and see her."

"Oh," cried he, raising his hands, "my poor sister!" He sighed as he said it, but he soon recovered his firmness, and put his gun behind the door. He then sat down for a minute by the table, drew Sâfel to him, and kissed him on both cheeks; and then he took Esdras in his arms. We looked on in silence. At last he said, "I am going to leave you, Father Moses; I am going to put up my things; but I find it hard to go away from you."

"We are very sorry too, sergeant," replied Sarah, in a sad tone. "If you would stay and live with us——"

"No; it is impossible."

"Then you will remain in the service?"

"Whose service?—what service?" cried he. "Serve under Louis XVIII.! Never! I know no general but my own. But it grieves me to go. However, when a man has done his duty——" He got up suddenly, crying with a loud voice, "Vive l'Empereur!" We shuddered, without knowing why. He opened his arms, and I arose,

and we embraced as if we had been brothers. "Adieu, Father Moses," said he; "adieu for a long while!"

"You are going away, then, directly?"

"Yes."

"You know, sergeant, you will always find friends here. You will come and see us, and if you want anything——"

"Yes, yes, I know you are real friends—you are good people," and he embraced me once more closer than before. Then he took his gun, and we followed him to the door, wishing him all happiness. He turned round with tears in his eyes, and said, "I must kiss you too, Madame Sarah; there is no harm, is there?"

"Oh, no," said she; "you are one of the family, and I will kiss Zeffen for you."

Then he went out, saying, in a husky voice, "Adieu."

I watched him go into his little room, at the end of the passage. Twenty-five years' service, eight times wounded, and not a bit of bread in his old age! the thought made my heart bleed.

About a quarter-of-an-hour after, the sergeant went down, taking his gun with him. He met Sâfel on the stairs, and said to him, "Give this to your father." It was the portrait of the wife and children of the landwehr at the Tuilerie. Sâfel brought it to me directly. I took the poor fellow's present, and looked on it long and sadly, and then locked it up in our press with the letter.

p. 245.

It was just noon, and as the gates were to be opened, and provisions would come in in abundance, we were sitting down to a large piece of beef in a dish of potatoes, and had drawn a bottle of good wine. We were in the middle of breakfast, when we heard cries in the street, and Sâfel got up to see what it was. "It is a soldier that is wounded, and they are taking him to the hospital," said he. A moment after, he cried out, "It is our sergeant!"

A terrible idea shot through me. Sarah was getting up, but I told her to sit still, and I went down by myself. The litter was borne by four gunners of marines, and the children were running after it. At the first glance I recognized the sergeant; his face was pale, and his breast covered with blood. The unhappy man had gone straight from our house to the bastion behind the arsenal, and had shot himself through the heart.

I went upstairs, but so shocked and miserable that I could hardly stand. Sarah had been waiting in anxious expectation. "Our poor sergeant has killed himself," said I to her. "May God forgive him!" And when I sat down, I burst into tears.

It is truly said that misfortunes never come singly. But, however, the death of our poor sergeant was our last. That very day the enemy withdrew their advanced posts to a distance of twelve hundred yards from the town; the white flag was hoisted on the church tower, and the gates were opened.

Now, Fritz, you know all about our blockade. Need I relate the arrival of Baruch, how Zeffen wept, and how we all grieved, when we told that good man that our David was dead, and that he would see him no more? No; I have said enough about the miseries of war, and all they bring in their train. I would rather talk to you about my sons Itzig and Fromel, and Sâfel, who went out to America to them.

But I could never tell you all the property they have got in that great and free country, the lands they have bought, the money they have saved, the happiness they have bestowed on Sarah and on me, the number of grandchildren they have given us. They have never let us want for anything. The greatest pleasure I can do them is to ask for something; one is more ready than the other to send it to me. They never forget that I saved them from the war by my great prudence.

I love them one as well as the other, Fritz, and I say with Jacob, "May the God of Abraham and Isaac, our fathers, by whom I have been held up ever since I was born, bless these children; may they multiply abundantly upon the earth, and their seed be many nations."

THE END.

00077329

Digitized with financial assistance from the
Government of Maharashtra
on 18 July, 2018